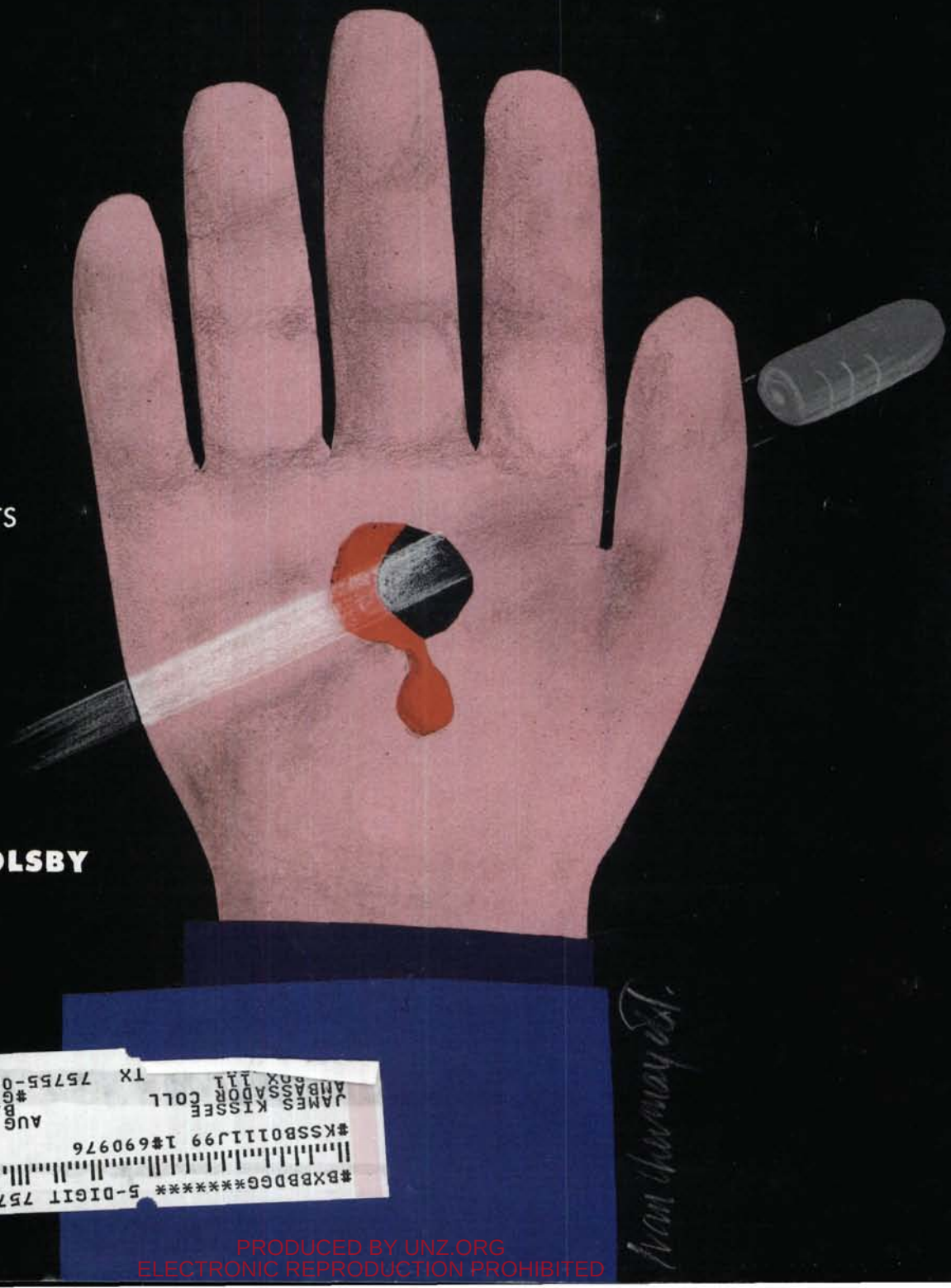
SOUTH AFRICA'S SMOLDERING CIVIL WAR / THREE WAYS TO CREATE JOBS

The Atlantic Monthly

MARCH 1994

THE FALSE PROMISE OF GUN CONTROL

GUN-CONTROL LAWS MAY SAVE SOME LIVES, BUT THEY CAN NEVER STEM THE FLOW OF GUNS, AND THEY DIVERT ATTENTION FROM THE ROOTS OF OUR CRIME PROBLEM



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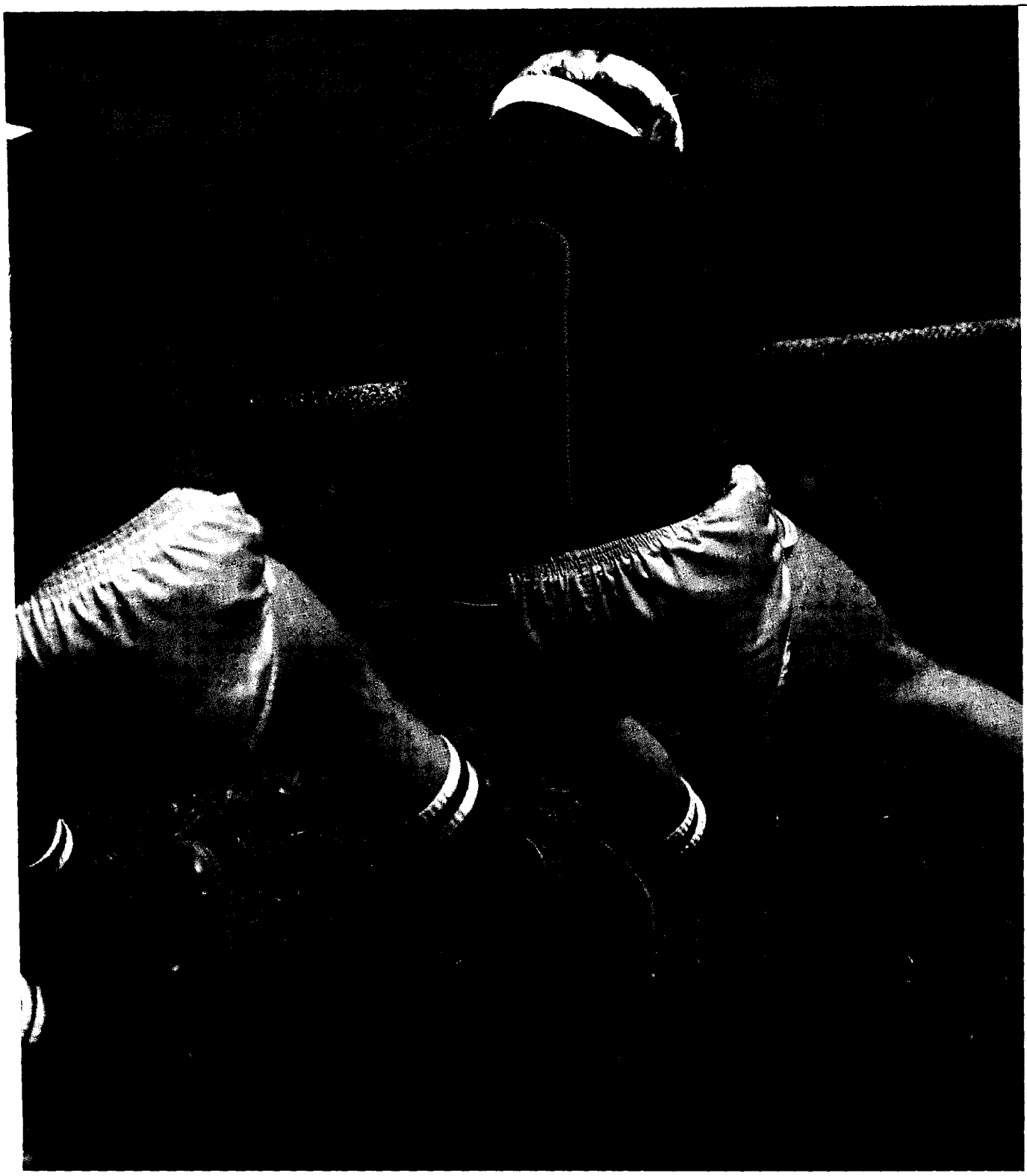

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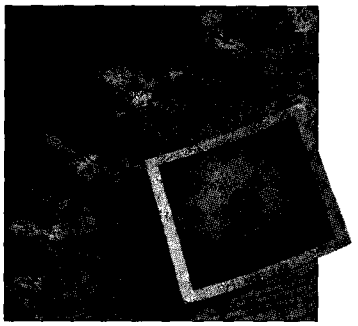

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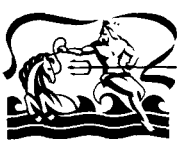

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Erling Kagge pulling his equipment sled across an ice ridge, photographed by expedition member Borge Ousland.

It sounds simple enough: be the first to get to the North Pole under your own power.

Consider what that entails: no dogs to pull the sleds, no aircraft to drop provisions, and no mechanized transport.

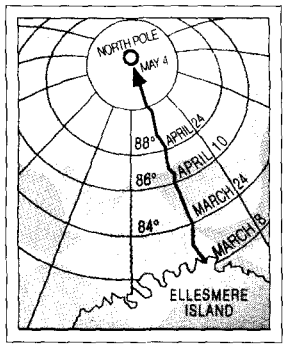
Randby, Kagge, and Ousland.

Nevertheless, three Norwegians, Erling Kagge, Borge Ousland, and Geir Randby set out from Canada to achieve the impossible.

"It seemed impossible. But we had to try."

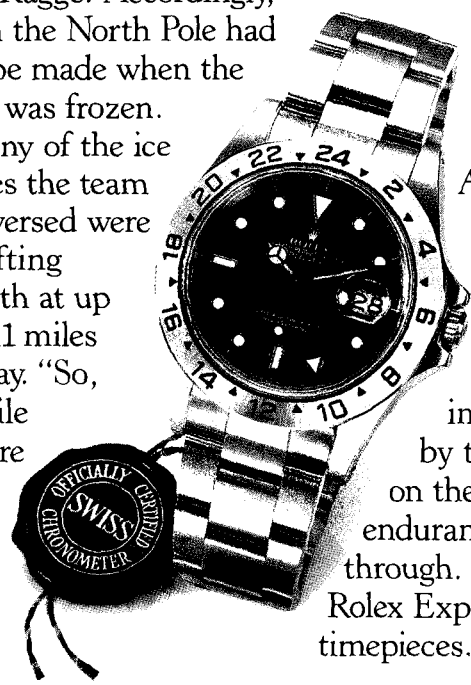
Erling Kagge

"The Arctic is a sea surrounded by continents," explains Kagge. Accordingly, their attempt to reach the North Pole had to be made when the sea was frozen. Many of the ice floes the team traversed were drifting south at up to 11 miles a day. "So, while trekking north, we were also sailing south."



Expedition route to the North Pole.

Traveling on skis, each man pulled 265 pounds of equipment on his sled. Everything they took was subjected to the same scrutiny; if it wasn't essential, it wasn't included. Among the indispensable items were their Rolex timepieces. "Compasses are unreliable in the Arctic, so our watches had to be absolutely dependable. Each day at noon we checked our bearings with a ski pole. Where the shadow fell was due north," Kagge says. This was simple navigation, but effective. They traveled 478 miles in temperatures as low as -65° F. Although Randby was injured and had to be evacuated, Kagge and Ousland reached the North Pole 58 days after starting this grueling expedition.



What to many seemed an impossible adventure was achieved by these polar explorers. They relied on their strength and endurance to see them through. And, on their Rolex Explorer II timepieces.

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745 BOYLSTON STREET

BILL Berkeley owes his career in journalism to James Agee, the author of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, the Depression-era classic about the poor of the rural South. Berkeley, whose article on South Africa appears in this issue, made Agee's book the focus of his senior thesis at Harvard. Hoping to interview some of Agee's subjects, Berkeley traveled to Alabama, where a few still remembered Agee and his associate, the photographer Walker Evans—and still resented them. A woman whose childhood photo was used on the cover of the book asked Berkeley, "What right did that man have to put my picture on the cover of his book?" She had been wearing a potato sack, and was ashamed of her family's poverty.

Her question brought home to Berkeley the sometimes complex role—partner and exploiter, sympathizer and critic, friend and enemy—of the journalist. It was a role Berkeley thought he would find challenging. After graduation he took a job as a reporter on an Alabama daily, for which he wrote a piece using the quotation above from the woman above—for which, doing unto Berkeley what she wanted to do unto Agee, she sued him.

Things got no easier for Berkeley after he became a freelance foreign correspondent based in Africa. Following an exposé he had written of the human-rights abuses committed by Liberia's tormentors du jour, Berkeley was warned that if he returned to Liberia, he would be killed. (He did return, after that regime was toppled.)

In Zaire, while working on a story for *The Atlantic Monthly*, Berkeley and his wife were arrested by the security police and interrogated for forty-eight anxious hours. Upon their release they were ordered to leave the country immediately. Their offense: "Unauthorized reporting."

Berkeley has written three pieces for *The Atlantic*—one on Liberia (published in December, 1992), one on Zaire (August, 1993), and the article in the current issue—and each partakes of that incendiary journalistic quality. In much of Africa the truth is so relentlessly appalling that telling it can amount to a subversive act. Having just won a prestigious Alicia Patterson fellowship to write a major study of ethnic conflict, Berkeley will soon be returning to Africa, and from there he will continue his unauthorized reporting for this magazine. —THE EDITORS

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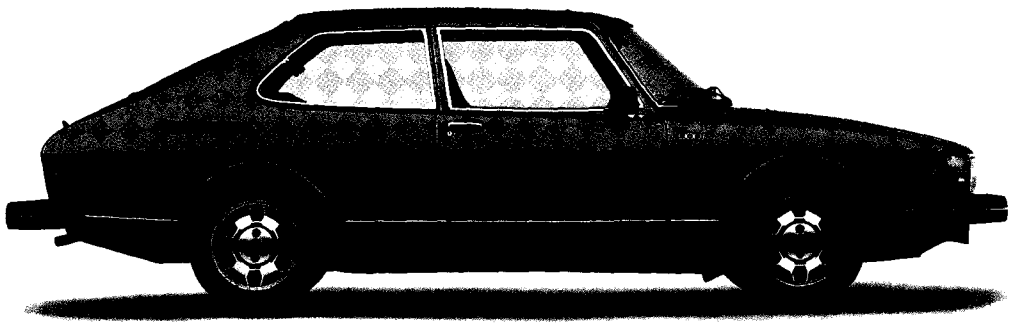

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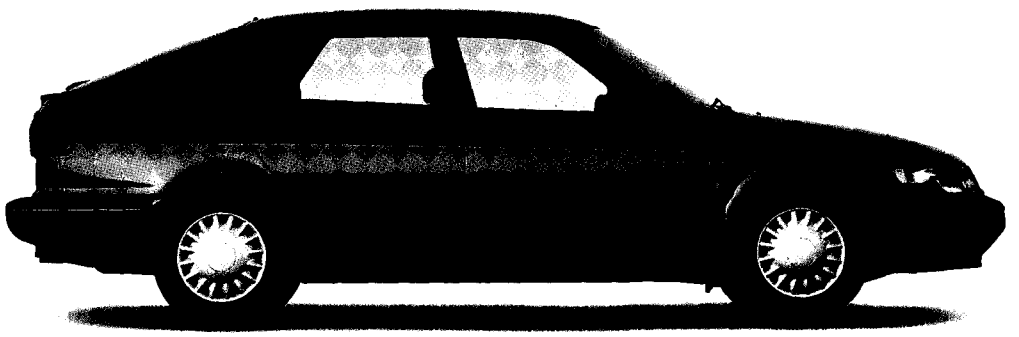

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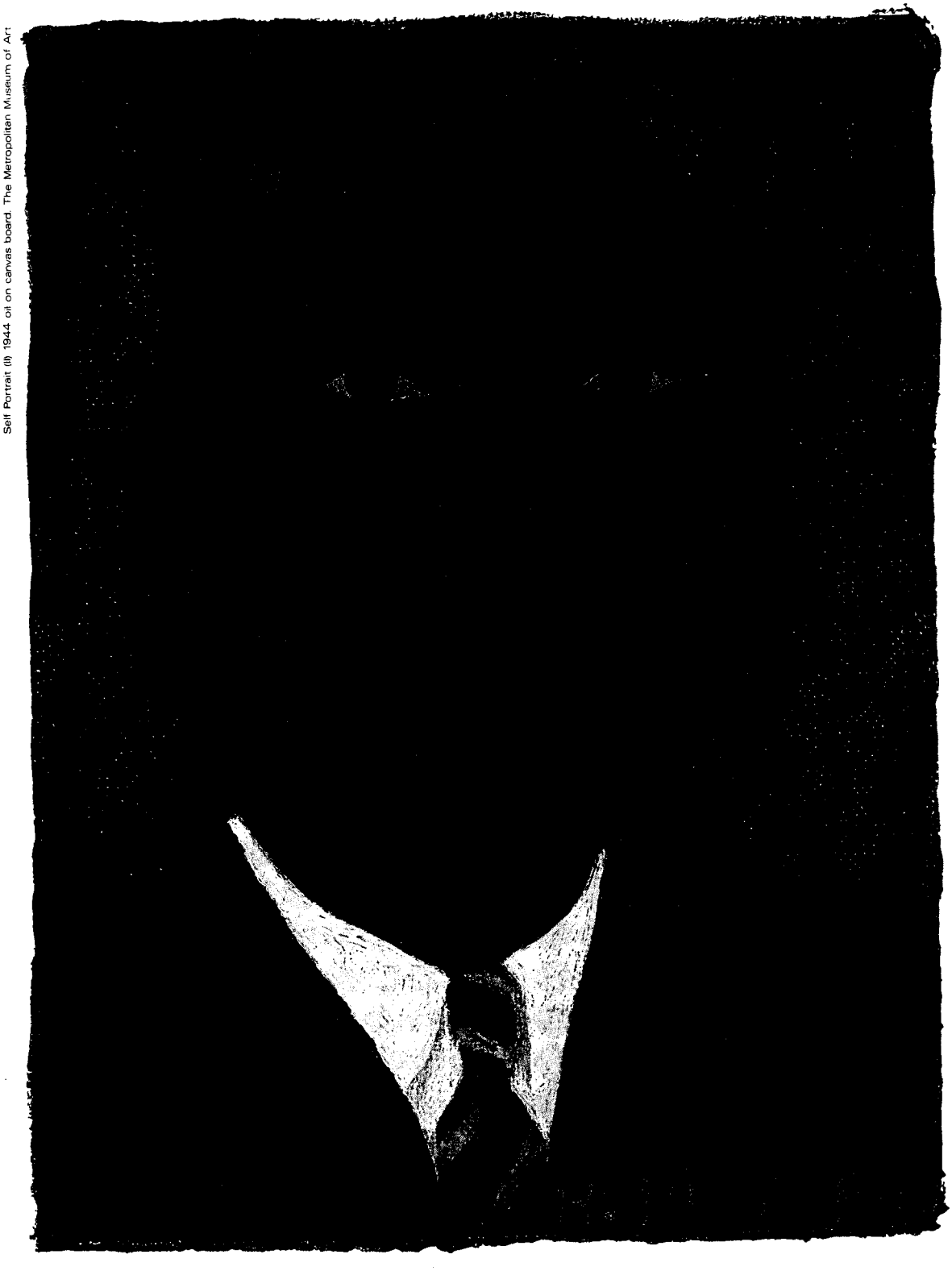

Self Portrait (II) 1944 oil on canvas board. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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LETTERS

Geography of Endangerment

The "Geography of Endangerment" (At Last Count, December *Atlantic*) is actually the demography of botanists, ornithologists, and entomologists. The "incomplete knowledge of the home range of particular species" is limited by the home range of workers who produce the census data for those species.

Consider the red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW). This endangered species thrives at Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Stewart, Georgia; Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; Fort A. P. Hill, Virginia; and many other military installations in the southeastern United States. An endangered bird ranging from Louisiana to Virginia? It defies common sense.

The official statistics would have us believe that this bird's population is booming on federal lands and in peril elsewhere. I suspect that you will find this bird in any pine forest where you look for it. Just as no one is looking very hard for the Indiana bat in Ohio and Illinois, no one is looking very hard for the RCW across the great stretches of land between military posts in the Southeast.

I am an Army officer at Fort Bragg. I have nothing against the RCW. We see every day that we can coexist just fine with the woodpeckers, but the environmental restrictions make us steer clear of their nesting areas. These restrictions are based on the conclusions of environmental workers who found the bird where they expected to find it, and searched no more.

Thomas J. Martin
Fort Bragg, N.C.

"The Geography of Endangerment" suffers from a severe flaw: it does not compensate for the wildly varied size of the more than 3,000 counties in the United States. Simply put, you cannot use absolute numbers (0 species, 1 species, 2 to 4 species, and so forth) to compare San Bernardino County, in California, which sprawls across 20,064 square miles, with Bristol County, in Rhode Island, which fits into a cozy twenty-six square miles. You can compare them, however, if you instead base the map on endangered species per square mile of each county. This standardizes the data and would better demonstrate the geographic disparities of endangered species. Indeed, it would show even more strikingly the threats to wildlife in coastal counties.

Peter L. Russell
La Grande, Oreg.

Charles Mann and Mark Plummer reply:

Ornithologists believe that the red-cockaded woodpecker is in fact endangered. Although the species is spread throughout the Southeast, each family group requires about 150 contiguous acres of eighty-year-old pine forest to have an adequate supply of its insect food. Moreover, this forest must contain hundred-year-old longleaf pines, because the woodpecker hollows out old, partly rotted longleaf pines to make its nest. Military bases are among the few places with the right kind of forest and trees, which partly explains the bird's peculiar distribution. Fewer than 6,000 are believed to exist, and their numbers are declining. As for Thomas Martin's larger point, that species cannot be found in places people have not looked, he will be reassured to learn that few species are listed before extensive biological surveys have been done. Still, these are hard to conduct and have big limitations, one of which is that private-property owners often refuse to grant permission to inspect their lands. This is another reason that endangered species seem to show up most often in public areas.

We were delighted to hear from Peter Russell, because we wanted to mention this problem in the text but had to cut the point for reasons of space. As Mr. Russell notes, the coastal emphasis of the map would not be changed by correcting for the disparity in county size—but its westerly bias would be somewhat affected.

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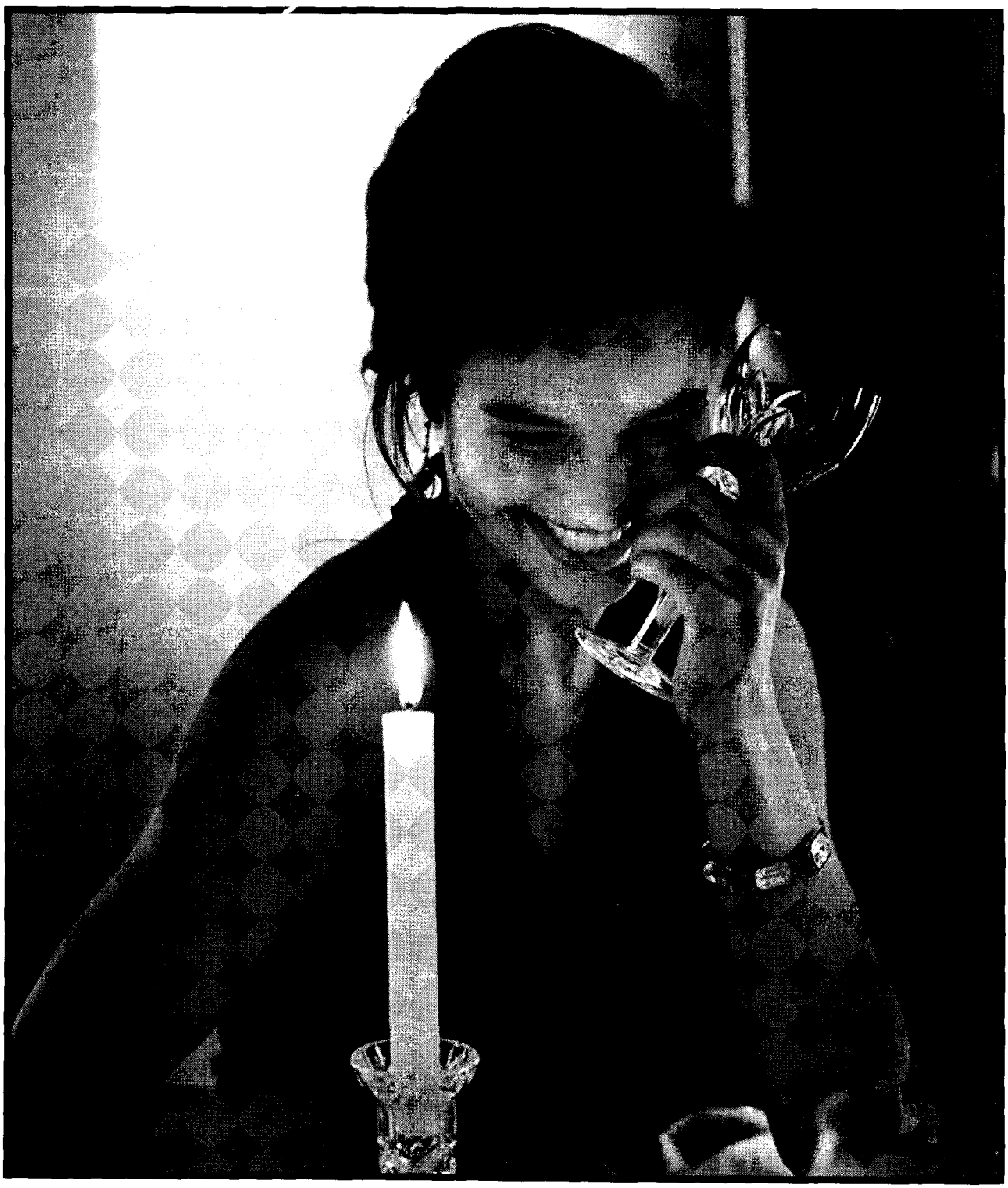

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On Gilligan's Views

We read with concern Wendy Kaminer's article "Feminism's Identity Crisis" (October *Atlantic*). As a group of feminists in Cambridge, England, we were initially interested to discover why some American women may be reluctant to be identified as feminists. It was appalling to see that the discussion of this important issue was marred by a misreading—or, rather, misrepresentation, since nothing is read—of Carol Gilligan's work, which, Kaminer says, is "central to the dominant strain of feminism today."

Kaminer sees Gilligan's thesis of gender difference as "a modern-day version of Victorian True Womanhood." In her view, Gilligan's psychology valorizes women's separate emotional spheres, idealizes motherhood, and leads to the popular notion that women are nicer than men. Yet at no place in her work does Gilligan idealize motherhood. Instead she addresses the conflicts many girls and women feel about responsibility to others, concern for others' feelings, and their urge to realize their own needs for freedom, challenge, and self-direction. Maternity, in Gilligan's view, is not the center of womanhood but an emotional reality whose parameters are all too often drawn by cruel social realities. Her work is always based on careful readings of actual voices—of what girls and women actually say. Instead of reverting to a Victorian stereotype of True Womanhood, Gilligan exposes continuing problems in old and new ideologies of femininity. She shows how girls and women either resist the weight of others' expectations and demands or suffer as they succumb to social pressures and denials of their wide-ranging feelings and characteristics. She asks, further, how we all must change to ease these burdens. If women are nicer than men, Gilligan shows, this is not because their different voices are sweet and placid but because their different voices are often not being heard.

Kaminer's conclusion is that the real challenge is to persuade people that the commitment to equality is compatible with a willingness to nurture. In Gilligan's latest book, *Meeting at the Crossroads* (co-authored with Lyn Mikel Brown), she addresses this need emphatically: in nurturing their daughters, mothers must learn to listen to the daughters' different voices—those individual voices different both from men's and from the small range of voices deemed appropriate for women.

If, as Kaminer says, Camille Paglia's criticisms of feminism are "flawed by her limited knowledge of feminist theory," then we put this fair point to Kaminer herself, who does not even attempt to analyze Gilligan's work but turns it into something called "Gilliganism," which has "passed with ease into the vernacular." Hence, without making one direct criticism of Gilligan's work, Kaminer invents a monster in that name—full of problems and dangers. Without a single accurate account of Gilligan's work, she dismisses it on the basis of her egregious construction of what it has become. If, as Kaminer says, "the challenge now is to make public debates about feminist issues as informed as they are intense," then we suggest that further questions be raised as to why this analysis of "feminism's identity crisis" refuses to be informed by the feminist theories it attacks.

Terri Apter
Pam Hirsch
Jane Marcus
Marilyn Strathern
Cambridge, England

Wendy Kaminer replies:

My criticisms of Carol Gilligan's work were based on her most influential book, the widely read and cited *In a Different Voice* (1982), not her recent collaboration with Lyn Mikel Brown. *In a Different Voice* established Gilligan as a popular authority on the psychology of women and helped revive the protectionist feminism, based on traditional notions of gender difference, that displaced equality feminism in the 1980s. *In a Different Voice* did indeed confirm traditional notions of women as more caring, more affective, and more relational than men, more interested in attending to feelings than in allocating rights. For women, the "moral imperative" is "an injunction to care," Gilligan says; for men, it is a less intimate, more abstract injunction to "respect the rights of others." What Gilligan depicts is a female moral sensibility that reflects a perception of "a world comprised of relationships rather than people standing alone, a world that coheres through human connection rather than through systems of rules."

Of course this implies that women are nicer than men; of course it recycles stereotypes of femininity, as many feminists have observed. (For scholarly critiques of Gilligan's work, see the Winter, 1986, issue of *Signs* or Cynthia Fuchs Epstein's most recent book, *Deceptive Distinctions*.) To deny that Gilligan's portrait of women "idealizes motherhood" is to deny the obvious, thoroughly analyzed historical connection between women's maternal roles and assumptions about their emotional and moral superiority. ("Only women get pregnant," people say to explain presumed characterological differences between the sexes.) To deny that a generalized view of women as the kinder, more caring sex is incompatible with the drive for equality is to ignore the equally obvious connection between assumptions about women's gentleness and assumptions about women's weakness—as a cursory review of the nineteenth-century women's movement makes clear.

Facing Up

Peter G. Peterson may be lacking in historical perspective as well as filial piety when he criticizes his late father's favorable attitude toward the Social Security program ("Facing Up," October *Atlantic*). Certainly it's true that the program subsidizes the middle class at the expense of poorer workers, but anyone who was present during the debates of the 1930s can attest that this was the price that had to be paid to get Congress to adopt any sort of program providing old-age security for the poor. Then as now, "welfare" was a pejorative term, and Congress thus insisted that all participants in the nascent Social Security program should contribute in some fashion to ensure their future benefits.

Peterson correctly argues that most Americans get far more in Social Security benefits than they deserve on an actuarial basis, but he fails to mention one of the major culprits—the automatic indexing of benefits that Congress adopted in 1975 and expanded in 1986. Previously Congress adjusted benefits from time to time, ostensibly to protect beneficiaries from the ravages of inflation, but actually to protect themselves from the wrath of retirees in election years. But retirees today consider the annual inflation adjustment to be a God-given right, ignoring the obvious damage this does to the fed-

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eral budget and to the nation's economic prospects. To understand the absurdity of this procedure, we need only note that the proposed seventy-five-cent cigarette-tax increase for health care would add about $55 a year annually to the average Social Security benefit (through its effect on the Consumer Price Index), and thus throw the federal budget even further out of balance. Peterson and other reformers should try to make the public understand that the indexing procedure is a very recent and unnecessary addition to the Social Security program—and a major contributor to the financial disaster that he so well describes.

William M. Burke
San Francisco, Calif.

Peter Peterson's attack on my generation cannot go unchallenged. Social Security was indeed explained to us forty years ago as a basic pension plan, to be supplemented by employers' plans. So why should I feel guilty if the government actuaries were incompetent and Congress violated the Social Security Trust by mandating "investment" exclusively in U.S. Treasuries?

Had my first contributions earned the usual actuarial norm of six percent, every dollar I paid would now be worth $10.29, more than compensating for the ravages of inflation. I paid into the fund for thirty-five years, and should therefore "get my money back" by 2017—well beyond my life expectancy. The same multiplier would yield more than $45,000 for the years after 2005! Unfortunately, my RCA pension also ignores inflation, although that plan's investments probably *did* beat inflation. (The Dow stood at 400 when I started to work there.)

I must also take issue with the claim that today's retirees are much wealthier than the working population. Seniors' "wealth" consists primarily of our homes, which we can hardly eat. Even selling them makes little sense: renting an apartment costs even more than paying escalating property taxes. Furthermore, just one serious ailment can consume the home equity in less than a year! Peterson should also keep in mind that any residual assets benefit—directly or through inheritance taxes—the generation that supports us old fogies.

Max J. Schindler
Boonton Township, N.J.

Peter Peterson blames our huge budget deficit on out-of-control spending on entitlements for the middle and upper classes. His arguments on this matter are excellent, but why did he dismiss so casually what could also be done by cutting the military budget to reflect the end of the Cold War?

Much of the opposition to closing U.S. military bases has been on the basis of preserving jobs rather than on grounds of military need. Peterson defines entitlements as any public-sector payments that are not contractual compensation for goods or services and says that this obviously excludes defense procurement. But if such goods or services are useless, such as nuclear submarines the Pentagon doesn't want, these expenditures should be classified as entitlements.

John J. Burton
Washington, N.J.

As a caseworker I work with many "poor" people. They generally receive health care, food stamps, subsidized housing, free lunches at school, public assistance for single parents, and Social Security benefits. They are also provided with education programs, counseling services, and some day care at no cost.

As a caseworker I work among "poor" colleagues. We earn less, sometimes much less, than $30,000 a year. We have college degrees, and are expected to pay for our own mortgages, rent, health insurance, food, education, transportation, and other needs. We always have less spending money than our clients.

Surely Peterson didn't mean to say that households with incomes of $30,000 "cannot possibly be considered poor."

B. Bess
Washington, Ill.

Peter Peterson says that the average person draws out much more money than he or she puts into Social Security. This is simply not true.

The average person will begin working at the age of twenty, and will work until age sixty-five, when retirement begins. Figuring the average salary at $35,000 a year (less in the early years, more in the later years), that person will have paid into the trust fund approximately $240,000 after forty-five years of working.

When this average person retires, his or her Social Security check will be in the neighborhood of $1,000 a month. If this person lives twenty years past the age of sixty-five, he or she will draw not quite all the Social Security put there in his or her name. Medicare is a different system, and I am not considering it in this calculation.

My husband and I together worked ninety-four years and paid into the Social Security trust fund. He began paying in 1937, and I in 1952. Altogether we have paid into the trust fund a sum considerably exceeding $500,000. He worked until the age of seventy-eight, when he dropped dead, and I retired the following year, at age seventy-eight. We did not draw Social Security until age seventy, when it came automatically.

After age seventy, for the eight years we worked, we had to declare half our Social Security as income, and pay income taxes on it. And for all of those years we paid the full amount of Social Security on all earnings.

And Peterson thinks I should be cut back on what I am receiving? I will fight that, because it is unfair. If I live another ten years (and I hope I will) and continue to receive what I am being paid now, the trust fund will keep about $100,000 of what my husband and I paid in. I realize that not everyone works full-time until age seventy-eight, but many of us do. We deserve what we are receiving. We have paid our dues.

Ann A. Reiner
San Diego, Calif.

Here's hoping that Peter G. Peterson has much more luck being heard than have I, a retired "entitlement beneficiary."

For many months and even years I've been writing my elected representatives and the White House citing reasons why we aged beneficiaries do not require the same cost-of-living adjustments as do younger folks: we don't have to buy as many clothes as we did when we were working, we need to drive less, we have lower and often paid-off mortgages or smaller rental units, and so forth.

More recently I wrote a letter to the AARP, resigning from that lobby and insurance peddler because it placed luxuries for the aged ahead of the public interest.

Tom E. Moses
Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

Although I am an over-sixty-fiver, I am furious at the "welfare" for the affluent elderly. Peter G. Peterson's line "some

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groups are organized and some are not" explains why I've canceled my membership in the AARP.

As far as oldsters' admitting that they long ago got back more than they ever put into Social Security, forget it. That's just not a subject one brings up while dining with the $100,000-a-year group that pays not one nickel for medical care.

Mary Meyer
Pasadena, Calif.

Peter G. Peterson replies:

I agree with William Burke's trenchant remarks about the history of cost-of-living-adjustments. Indeed, I make some of the very same points in my book *Facing Up: How to Rescue the Economy From Crushing Debt and Restore the American Dream.*

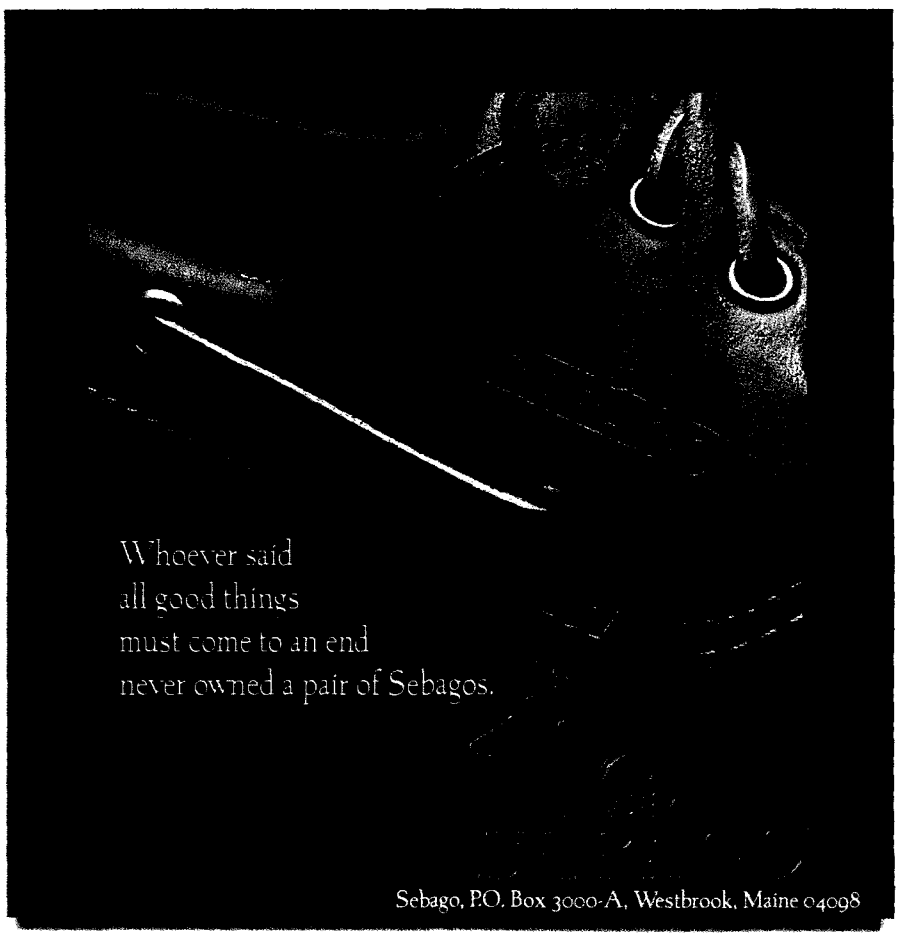
I must say, however, that Mr. Burke is more cynical than I am in his proposition that Americans will help the needy only if the affluent are somehow bribed to go along. This idea assumes that government can do the right thing only by also doing the wrong thing. Furthermore, it assumes that a lot of people are not only bribed but also fooled. For how can everyone receive a windfall unless somebody (either in this generation or the next) pays for it?

Ann Reiner makes an argument I hear frequently. I certainly understand her feelings. At the same time, I think that she, like many seniors, may be unaware of the actual numbers. In asserting that her prior payroll contributions fully justify her current benefit levels, she seems to be multiplying a typical annual salary ($35,000), taxed over forty-five years, by *today's* total Federal Insurance Contribution Act tax rate (15.3 percent) to arrive at a lifetime payment of $240,000 into the Social Security trust funds. Surely, she writes, this justifies a retirement check of $1,000 a month. There are two big problems with her calculation. First, it includes FICA taxes currently payable for Hospital Insurance, Disability Insurance, and various survivors' benefits. The current FICA tax rate payable exclusively for retirement benefits is not 15.3 percent but 8.6 percent. Second, she fails to note that throughout most of her working years the rate was *much* lower than it is today. Back when today's seventy-year-olds were fifty-five (and presumably at the peak of their career earnings), the effective tax rate was only 6.3 percent. Back when they were forty, it was only 5.1 percent. Back when they were thirty, it was only 2.2 percent.

When I talk with today's senior citizens, I find that they are often surprised to be reminded how little the young average-earning worker paid in total *yearly* FICA contributions back in 1940 ($26) or 1950 ($76). I find that many are also shocked to learn how much the young average-earning worker must pay today ($3,513). Needless to say, there's a lot more growth in those numbers than just inflation or higher wages.

When today's seniors were starting out, FICA was a trivial tax that promised wondrous future benefits. For today's young Americans, it is an enormous tax —larger than the federal income tax for nine out of ten workers under age thirty —that supports a system whose future costs seem to be heading endlessly upward. The young are willing to respect some of the sacrifices that seniors made early in life, but they also want seniors to lend a more sympathetic ear to their burdens.

In my book I propose a detailed, comprehensive plan for balancing the budget by the year 2000. Fairness and progressivity are integral to this plan. Although affluent senior citizens must do their part, it is fair to ask them to do so only when *everyone else* is also being asked to do his or her part for a balanced-budget plan. Reforms of Social Security and Medicare which will affect seniors, for example, must be directly linked to the reform of other entitlement programs, from farm subsidies to certain veterans' benefits. All these programs currently include large helpings of welfare for the well-off—which must come to an end if we hope to be fiscally sound and responsible again. That's why we also need to cap mortgage and company-health-care deductions. We must take steps to persuade everyone that we are all in this heroic effort together.



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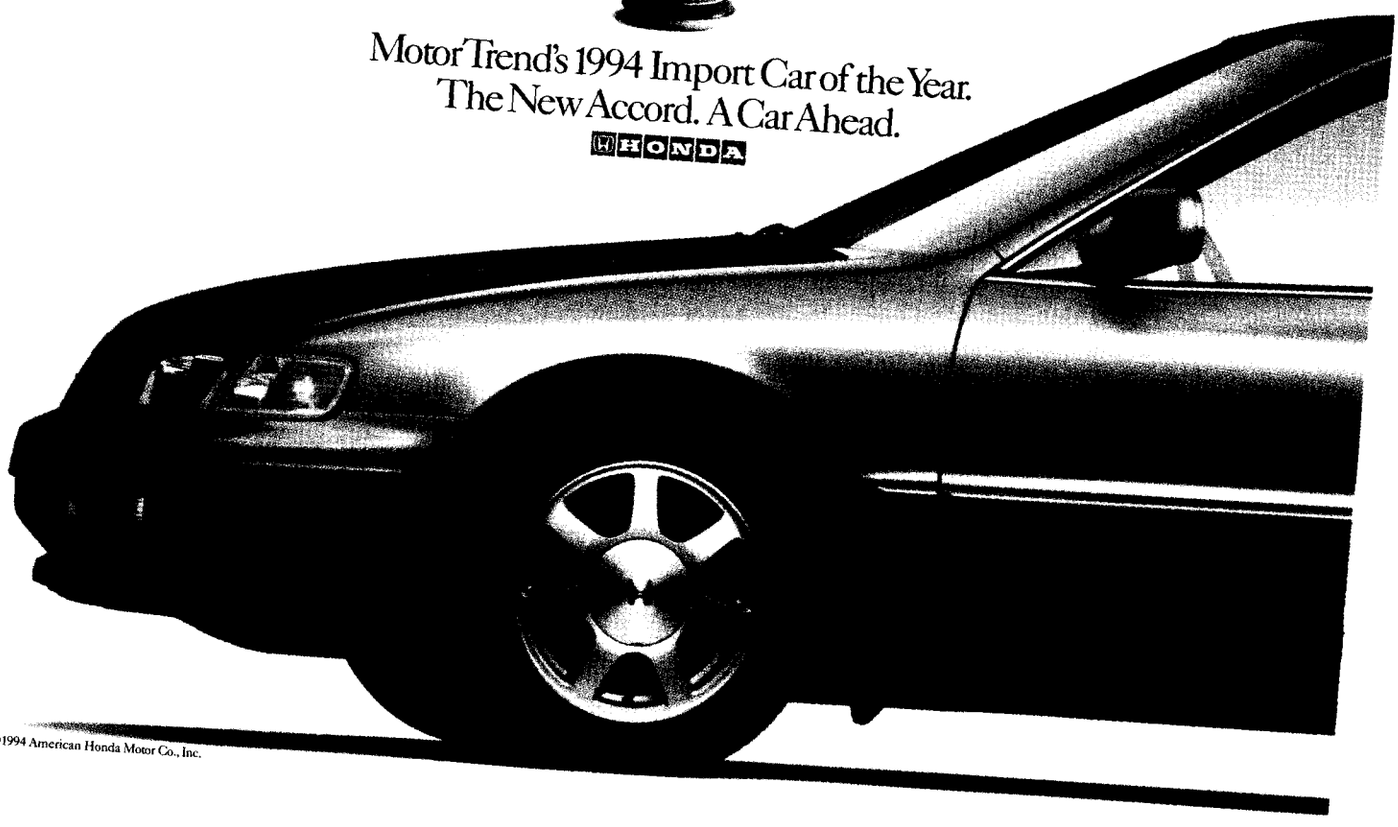

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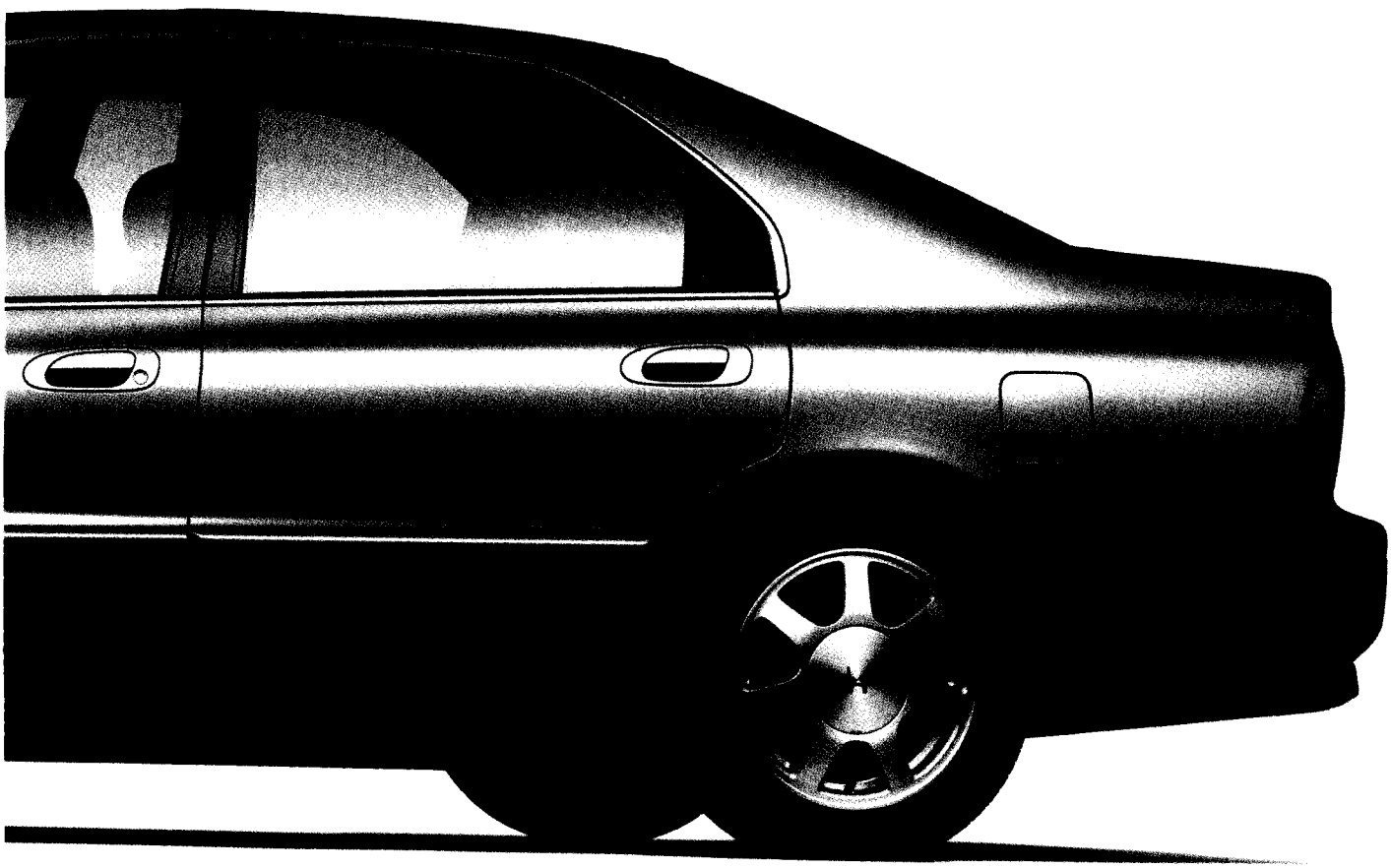

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THE MARCH ALMANAC

Health & Safety

March **1**, today marks two victories for the nation's anti-smoking lobby. In Minnesota the country's first statewide ban on smoking in licensed family day-care homes during children's hours takes effect. (Minnesota, like most states, already bans smoking in day-care centers.) Providers may smoke only while supervising children outdoors; repeat offenders may lose their licenses. According to a report by Child Care Works, a statewide advocacy group, some 40 percent of Minnesota's child-care providers are smokers. And in New York, by a 10-to-1 vote of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, cigarette ads will henceforth be barred from suburban rail lines, including the Long Island Rail Road and the Metro-North commuter line; they have been barred from the MTA's subways and buses since the first of last year. In 1992 cigarette ads accounted for some 20 percent, or about $5 million, of the MTA's revenues from advertising.

Expiring Patent

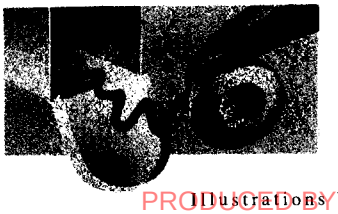
No. 4,012,062. Sanding device for a motor vehicle. "A sanding device for a motor vehicle adapted for depositing a non-skid substance at a controlled rate forwardly of each rear wheel, which comprises: a roof of said motor vehicle having an interior chamber . . . adapted to receive said non-skid substance . . . a pair of chutes communicating . . . with said chamber, each said chute extending downwardly to a point forwardly of each said rear wheel . . . [and] a pair of slide plates . . . for opening and closing each said lower end of each said chute. . . ."

Environment

March **15**, today the National Aeronautics and Space Administration launches a seven-month mission to study ozone depletion, especially above the populated latitudes of the Southern Hemisphere. Scientists have a clear picture of how chlorofluorocarbons cause the annual ozone thinning over Antarctica, but the chemistry of ozone depletion in low and middle latitudes is little understood. The mission will probe the stratosphere at about 68,000 feet; it will be the most comprehensive research effort on the subject to date. Despite international agreements to eliminate the use of CFCs, the depleted area over Antarctica, which is already larger than the United States, will continue to widen at least until the middle of the next century, when the effects of the peak load of CFCs now wafting upward will finally cease to be felt.

Government

March **1**, the Federal Trade Commission rules governing goods bought by mail are expanded today to cover goods bought over telephone lines (including by fax and personal computer). The rules require reasonable shipping deadlines and notices of delay, and stipulate cancellation and refund rights. Telephone orders now account for about half of the $48 billion spent yearly by means of direct-mail shopping; consumers are thought to have been losing some $250 million each year because of unscrupulous telephone marketers. Also today, a law goes into effect in California permitting the sale of a self-defense spray derived from cayenne pepper. The spray, which is used by many law-enforcement agencies across the country and is sold in most other states, is thought to be more effective than mace because it is an inflammatory agent, not merely an irritant (to which intoxicated attackers may be impervious). Californians wishing to buy the spray must first watch a 26-minute video or pass a multiple-choice test.



The Skies

March **2**, Jupiter lies just north of the waning Moon. **12**, at 2:06 A.M., the Moon is new; that is, it is invisible. Those who engage in the esoteric sport of young-Moon spotting (the record for a first sighting is about 14 hours after the new Moon) can try for a glimpse low on the western horizon at sunset today, before the Moon sets too. **27**, Full Moon, also known this month as the Sap, Worm, and Awakening Moon.

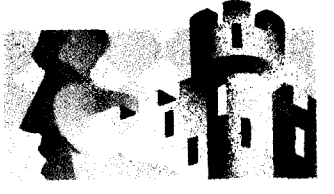
Demographics

This month launches the peak season for apartment-hunting in most of the country (Florida and Arizona are exceptions: in those states activity picks up instead in late fall, when many northerners decide to head for warmer climes). This trend results in part from the fact that families with children generally prefer to move at the end of the school year, and time their searches accordingly. Another factor is the obvious desirability of moving during clement weather. The proportion of the nation's households now living in rental units is the lowest

ever: according to statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, rentals have lost considerable ground since the end of the Great Depression, when 56.4 percent of all households were renters. The number has since declined steadily except during the 1980s, when the steep costs of homeownership and the huge influx of immigrants to the United States gave it a slight lift; today it stands at only 35.3 percent.

75 Years Ago

Edgar J. Goodspeed, writing in the March, 1919, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "He can have given little thought to his own mind who does not see in it a complex structure, with many rooms that are far from modern. Everybody, one observes, is orthodox in some phase of his thinking; that is, there are some old rooms in his mind which he has not yet remodeled. Nor are these older chambers of the mind tenantless. In many a one of them dwells the spirit of some ancestor who added it to our mental establishment. For the mind is in a measure an inheritance, however much we may be responsible for the furniture we put into it. It is partly the society of these old fellows that makes these chambers of the mind attractive or otherwise. Who has not felt, in moments of sheer enjoyment, the sheer disapproving presence of some stiff old Puritan forefather to whom all pleasure was anathema, and has not forthwith fled to some sunnier mental spaces where he could not follow?"



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Healthy Terror

In our concern for the fate of the natural world, one essential element seems to be missing

by Richard Conniff

REGARDING the third or possibly fourth most influential writer of natural history ever produced by Western civilization, almost nothing is known except that he was a systematic plagiarist and suffered from an inordinate fondness for monsters. Classicists have generally surmised from close readings of the text that Gaius Julius Solinus was a Roman, or anyway a citizen of the Roman Empire, who cobbled together his *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium* (*Collection of Remarkable Facts*) sometime between 220 and 280 A.D. It was a work of about 200 pages, consisting mostly of sensationalized borrowings from the Roman encyclopedist Pliny, and when modern critics try to characterize it, words like "wretched" and "trivial" spring to mind. It is a source of understandable consternation for these critics to add that Solinus nonetheless helped shape European ideas about nature and the world at large for more than a thousand years.

Images of monsters derived from the Nuremberg Chronicle

As his title promised, Solinus presented readers with a world of marvels, some of them pleasing, most of them horrifying. In Germany the nocturnal traveler could depend on luminous birds to light his way through the forest. In Ethiopia (a vague term referring to any place from Senegal to Somalia) lived ants the size of mastiffs, which used their claws for digging gold. Egypt was subject to periodic invasion by vast flights of winged serpents, against which the vigilant ibis was the only defense. In India dwelt the cruel manticore, a lion with a scorpion's tail and a human face, which "seeketh most greedilie after man's flesh."

The natural world as Solinus presented it was deeply polarized. Some animals were intuitively sensitive to human needs and properly submissive in serving them, while others, like the manticore, lived chiefly to rip human flesh—which could itself take strange and monstrous forms. Solinus populated distant nations with Cynocephali, or dog-headed people, and with headless people called Blemmies, whose faces were incorporated into their chests. No doubt such marvels found an eager audience in part because of their storybook quality. In time Solinus and his book alike became known simply as Polyhistor, the teller of many tales.

But unlikely as it may seem to modern readers, Solinus endured for a millennium because people also believed what he wrote. In place of original research Roman writers of Solinus' day liked to cite as many notable authors as possible. They bequeathed to the Middle Ages the naive idea that, as one modern scholar put it, the writer "who could assemble the greatest number of authorities on a subject was himself the most reliable authority." Solinus named more than sixty sources (Pliny conspicuous by omission). Christianity readily perpetuated the Roman regard for authority. But where Solinus distorted reality in the cause of entertainment, the Church distorted it as a way of disclosing Christian truth. What mattered was not whether certain animals actually existed so much as what the animals *signified*. Animals became parables, a form of moral shorthand. The Western world found that it could get by with a grab bag of ideas about nature, and for centuries turned its back on nature itself.

Strange creatures out of Solinus turned up repeatedly on sober world maps as well as in fables, and not just during the medieval period but well into the age of exploration. Solinus provided the stock images to which map illustrators returned even in the 1700s, as in these mocking lines from Jonathan Swift: "So Geo-

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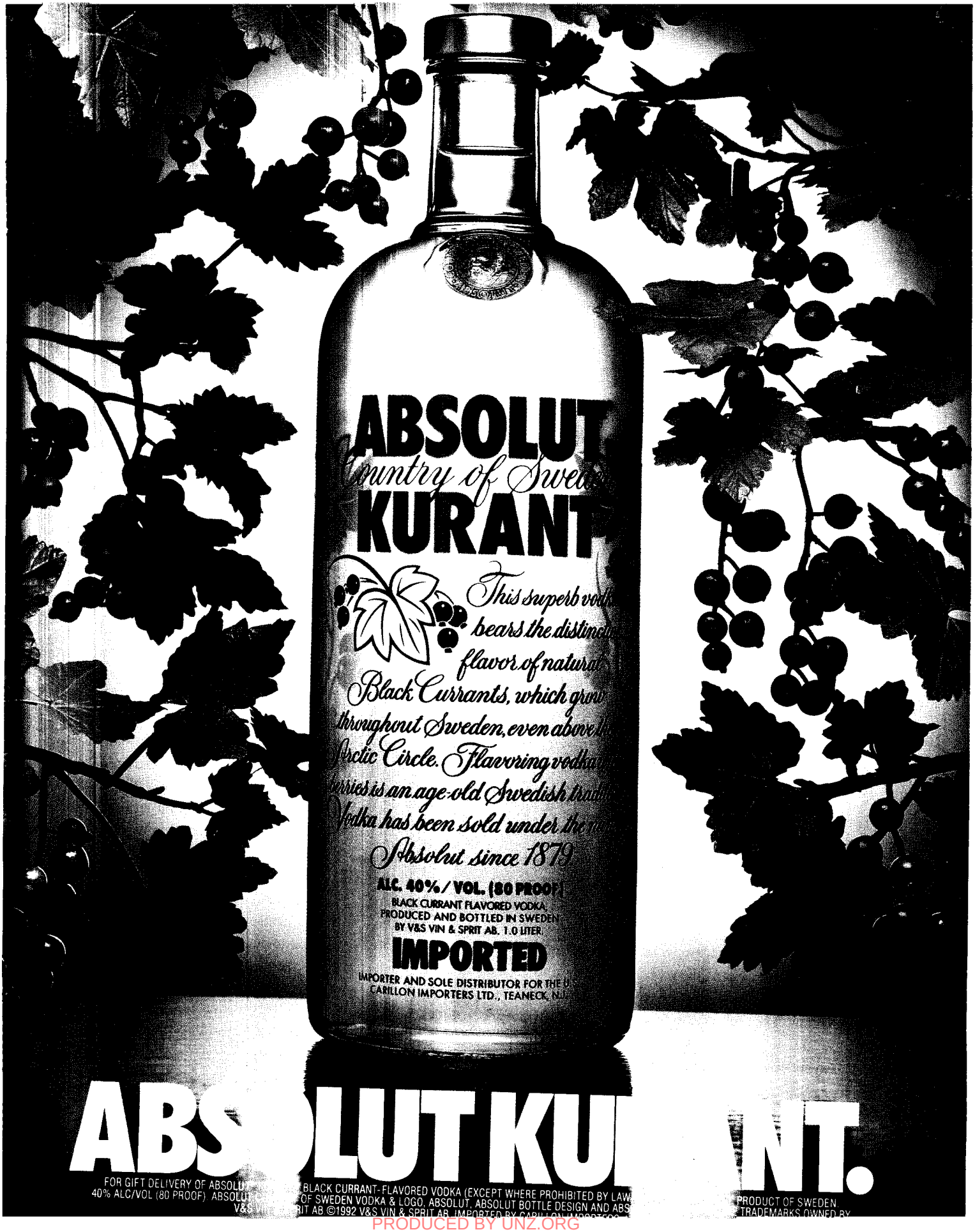

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graphers in *Afric*-maps / With Savage-Pictures fill their Gaps." The *Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493 featured Sciopods (or "shade-foots"), a swift but single-footed race of beings who dealt with the midday equatorial sun by flopping onto their backs and raising their huge feet overhead as parasols. When early explorers did not actually find Sciopods or manticores where Solinus and subsequent writers had put them, wishful mapmakers simply moved these figures farther out into terra incognita. Thus did Solinus persist, on the strength of what Rabelais later characterized as "beautiful lies."

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It is of course perfectly fitting that Solinus and his dubious contributions have finally been forgotten. The remarkable thing is that such a paltry figure would ever have been remembered in the first place. He persisted in part, I think, because he tapped a genuine and badly underrated human attitude toward the natural world. Solinus understood that nature scares a lot of people silly, and this is why he intrigued me when I stumbled onto his work not long ago. It is an antidote, albeit an extreme one, to the fuzzier one-with-the-universe attitudes of our own time.

Let me be more explicit about this, at the risk of saying good things about a very bad book, and incidentally of appearing to be a throwback. Despite the efforts of many earnest and life-affirming people to persuade me that the vampire bat is our friend and that Native Americans enjoyed true harmony with Brother Wolf, I have never quite overcome the gut feeling that fear of nature is normal, healthy; at times it's even pleasurable. One reason I spend much of my time writing about the natural world is that it gives me the creeps, and the more I learn, the creepier and more wonderful it gets. There really are terrible things out there to be afraid of—not ant-lions and manticores, maybe, but grizzly bears, cottonmouth moccasins, funnel-web spiders, a knot of angry yellow jackets swarming up from under the lawn mower. Nature fascinates and horrifies me in equal and directly proportionate measure, and I like to keep a respectful distance.

Our feelings of benevolence toward the wilderness are a measure of how thoroughly the wilderness has been subdued.

It seems to me that the modern world, in full retreat from the fang-and-claw nightmares of the past, tries too hard to do the opposite, to be cool about the natural world when our hearts are quaking, to exhibit healthy, scientific attitudes, like kids in a junior high school sex-education class. I think of David Attenborough purveying ecological dogma sotto voce while very nearly sitting in a gorilla's lap, or of a woman I once watched pluck a tree boa from a branch in a Peruvian rain forest and wrap it around her forearm as if it were a bracelet from Bloomingdale's. There is something a little patronizing in this swim-with-the-dolphins mentality. We are in danger of turning what's left of the planet into a petting zoo. Aldous Huxley once wrote that nineteenth-century English romanticism about nature was possible only because the dark and terrifying forests had been cut down and the landscape opened up. All those broadaxes made the Lake District safe for Wordsworth. Similarly, our feelings of benevolence toward the wilderness are a measure of how thoroughly the wilderness has been subdued, and of our urbanized distance from it. The catalogue of horrors put forward by Solinus is, in contrast, a testimony to nature's strength. One reads it with a sense of nostalgia for the sound of wilderness still scratching and howling just beyond Europe's garden gate.

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Solinus reminded me that what is missing from our attitude toward nature is a modicum of healthy terror. The scientists who nowadays dominate our view of nature make a mistake in overlooking this, when they extrapolate from their own quite proper avoidance of emotion about nature, their clinical dryness, their disdain for the anthropomorphic, and expect the rest of us to behave accordingly. They present us with the natural world as laboratory, or as intensive-care unit, or, in their more daring moments, as secular cathedral, and the public, with polite respect, gradually nods out.

It is unwise to be smug about Solinus, because the world seems once again to be turning its back on reality. It used to be that the wilderness was too frightening; now it seems to have become too tame, too domesticated. Kenya has proposed fencing in its elephants. Rain forests are a day trip from a resort hotel. The dull generalists of the animal world—the mallards and the mute swans—are everywhere in the ascendant. We have no shortage of entertaining new mythologies to substitute for this bland reality—from Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and the aliens in supermarket tabloids to the dinosaurs recently resurrected in Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park*. It is possible that we can get by with such substitutes, much as the Middle Ages got by with Solinus.

But if we want to get the public thinking about real wilderness, and interested enough to want to save it, then I have a suggestion. What scientists and environmentalists ought to do, before it's too late, is to celebrate all the strange and wonderful things they have learned about how the natural world really works: for instance, the fact that the lowly housefly uses taste hairs on its feet, of all places, and yet has a palate 10 million times as discriminating as ours; or the fact that the three-toed sloth manages to idle through life as a living fermentation chamber, a listless bag of guts; or the even stranger fact that the hundreds of moths and beetles living in a sloth's fur patiently wait to dine and lay their eggs on its weekly defecation. Science needs to give us a world of remarkable facts as entertaining and as compelling as anything in Solinus. Only this time it will all be real. If it is good enough, then maybe the third millennium, unlike the first, will not have to make do with fantasy alone. ❦

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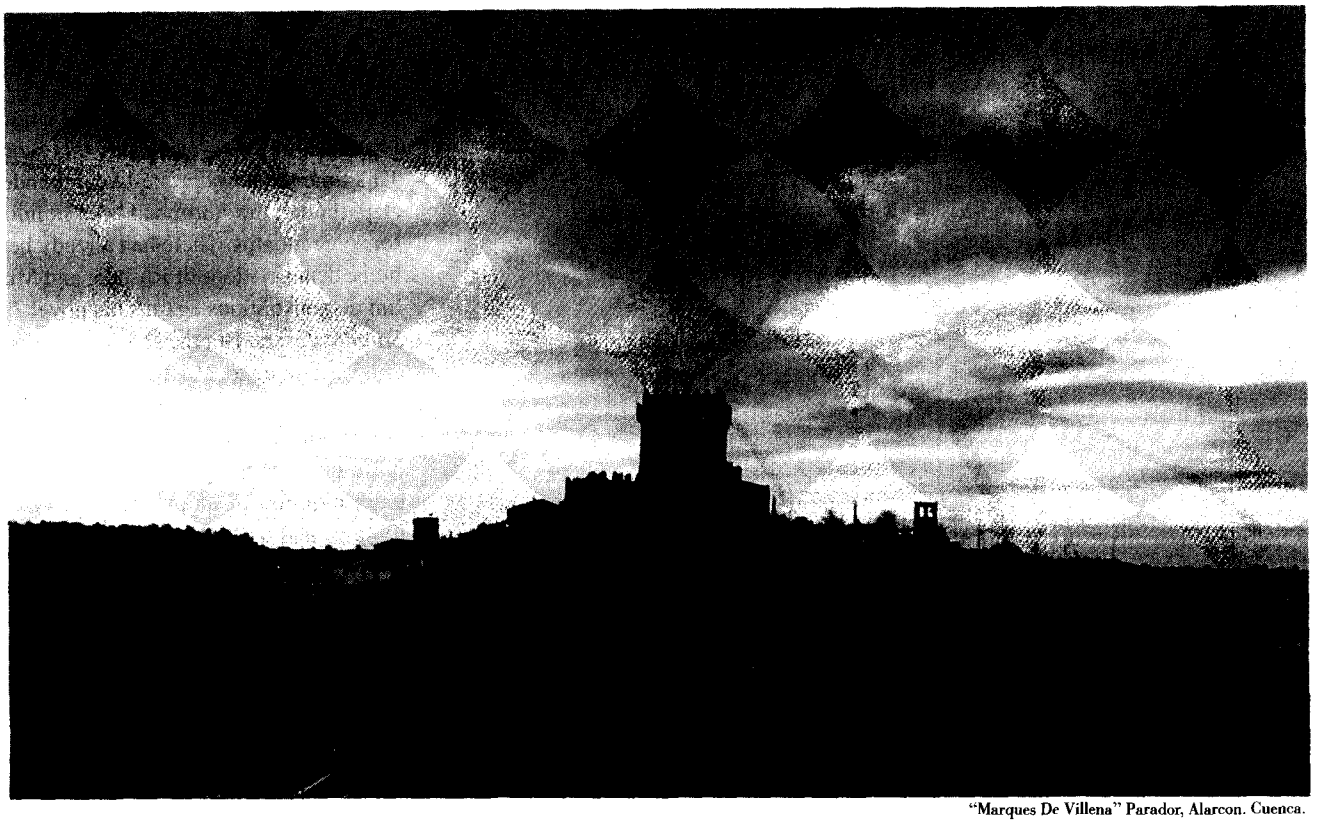

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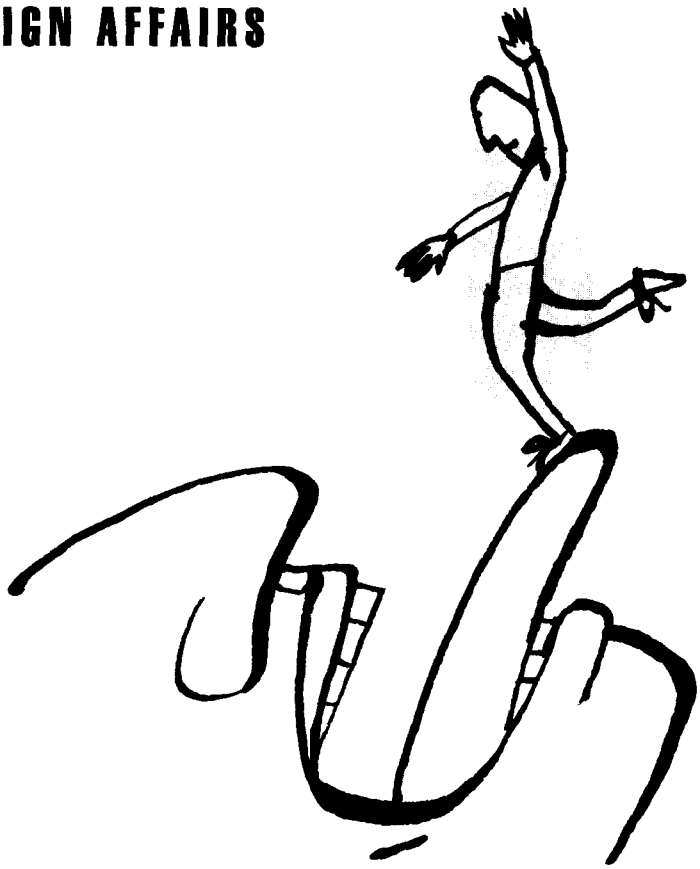

The Friends of Salman Rushdie

Like the Dreyfus Affair, the Rushdie Affair has in complicated ways divided opinion along left-right lines. And it isn't easy to say which side has behaved better—or worse

LONDON

A HUNDRED years ago, on October 15, 1894, a French army officer was arrested and soon afterward charged with treason. The charge was false, but Captain Alfred Dreyfus was convicted. His conviction—even his public degradation in a barracks square before he was sent to Devil's Island—caused no immediate stir, although the terrible ceremony was witnessed by the Paris correspondent of a Vienna newspaper, Theodor Herzl, who watched this humiliation of a fellow Jew in front of a crowd baying for Jewish blood, drew his own conclusions about the strength of anti-Semitism in Europe, and months later wrote *Der Judenstaat*, his blueprint for the Zionist state. It wasn't until some time later that Emile Zola and Georges Clemenceau took up Dreyfus's cause, and "*l'Affaire*" became the great political controversy of its age, dividing all France and even Europe.

by Geoffrey Wheatcroft

Five years ago, on February 14, 1989, a British novelist of Indian birth and Muslim upbringing learned that a decree had been pronounced against him by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the religious authorities of Iran, condemning him to death for blaspheming Islam, and enjoining the faithful to carry out this work. This time the news broke like a thunderclap, though the storm had been building for some months. There had already been fierce denunciations of Rushdie and Muslim demonstrations against his novel *The Satanic Verses*. But the shock that February was still huge. Most of us—including maybe Salman Rushdie himself—had never heard of a *fatwa* and could not quite believe it. It couldn't happen, the extermination of an apostate for something he had written—not as the last decade of the twentieth century was about to open.

It has not happened. Five years later, as I write, Rushdie is alive. He is still in hiding, carefully guarded by the British police, but his life is a good deal freer than it was in his first year of terror. He has traveled widely, to meet President Bill Clinton in Washington and to speak at meetings in Boston and New York. In London he quite often appears at private parties and at literary gatherings, such as launch parties for friends' books. He is reconciled to leading a circumscribed existence for the rest of his life, recognizing that he will never be entirely safe from lone fanatics but believing—as his words were relayed by a reporter last December—that "if Iran, thanks to international pressure, were forced to lift the *fatwa*, he would dispense with government security, lie low, write his books, and never seek political limelight again."

Whatever happens, the Rushdie Affair will remain as much a defining event of our time as Dreyfus's was of his. Despite Rushdie's thankful survival, it caused enough bloodshed: attacks, some fatal, on translators and publishers, in Norway, Italy, and Japan; riot and upheaval from India to Turkey. But it was more than a political issue; it was a *Kulturkampf*. It divided continent from continent, culture from culture, nation from nation; in the United States and in England itself it savagely divided opinion. So the other *Affaire* had done, dividing friend from friend, brother from brother, the duc de Guermantes from the prince de Guermantes. Not everyone reacted the "right" way a hundred years ago, and there were parallels with the confused responses to

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the Rushdie case. For example, the French socialist leader Jean Jaurès should have been a Dreyfusard from the beginning. He later became one, but his first reaction to Dreyfus's conviction was to complain that an officer was merely imprisoned for treason when private soldiers were shot.

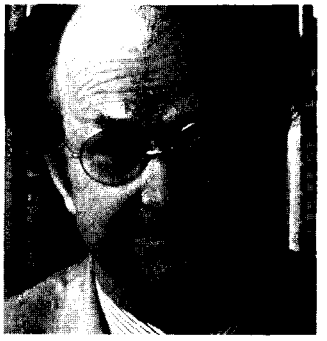
On the whole, however, more people came out of the original *Affaire* well than out of our own Affair, which divided opinion on left-right grounds, but was more complicated than that, and more uncomfortable. And it isn't easy to say which side has behaved better, or worse; Salman Rushdie himself has sometimes cut a less than heroic figure (though that was true of Dreyfus also). He finds himself (again, like Dreyfus) cast in a role that he did not seek or expect. For none of that should he be blamed or reproached. But the greater truth is that Rushdie has never fully understood what his Affair was all about or the full irony of his own position.

ALTHOUGH the *fatwa* was not quite a litmus test, it turned some people funny colors. When a man's life is threatened, you might expect universal expressions of sympathy, however muted. Not a bit of it. In Rushdie's adoptive country the reaction was naked schadenfreude. On the political, journalistic, and even academic right in England malicious glee ran riot. Auberon Waugh wondered in *The Spectator* "just how much we should exert ourselves, as deeply stained white imperialists, to protect him from his own people." More surprising (at least to those who remember back to the 1930s, when he was one of the Auden gang and a teenybopper Communist) was to find Sir Stephen Spender writing about Rushdie in the same paper:

> It is mass immigration that has got him into the trouble in which he now finds himself. . . . Democracy is threatened in many countries now by immigration . . . partly because the immigrants themselves are by no means always upholders of democracy.

That was an only slightly more measured version of what Peregrine Worsthorne had written in *The Sunday Telegraph*, which he then edited, crowing over Rushdie's predicament.

Almost the fiercest of all was Hugh Trevor-Roper, Lord Dacre, formerly a professor of history at Oxford and head of a Cambridge college. He deplored Rushdie's "brutal and vulgar manners," and he "would not shed a tear," he wrote some months after the *fatwa* was pronounced, "if some British Muslims, deploring his manners, should waylay him in a dark street and seek to improve them." Tory politicians joined in the chorus against Rushdie, often for the wonderfully ignominious reason that his case has impaired relations—and trade—with Iran and other countries. The former Prime Minister Sir Edward Heath was a fine example, opposing any meeting between his successor at 10 Downing Street and Rushdie because, on account of "that wretched book," British industry had lost "masses of trade." But the prize for venom was won by Norman Tebbit. He is a Tory politician, was a Cabinet Minister for most of the 1980s, and was one of Margaret Thatcher's closest colleagues and a lead player in the Thatcherite drama. Lord Tebbit described Rushdie as "despicable" and "an outstanding villain."


Rex USA

Auberon Waugh wondered "just how much we should exert ourselves, as deeply stained white imperialists, to protect [Rushdie] from his own people."

> His public life has been a record of despicable acts of betrayal of his upbringing, religion, adopted home and nationality. Now he betrays even his own sneers at the British establishment as he cowers under the protection of a government, a police force, and a society he once denounced as racist and undemocratic.

There had to be an explanation for this chorus of vengeful abuse. It was not far to seek. The Rushdie Affair not only brought out the worst in many people but provided a very useful weapon, just like the original *Affaire*. The anti-Dreyfusards were reactionary clerical nationalists, who had been fighting a rearguard action against the Third Republic and everything it stood for: *liberté, egalité, fraternité*; bourgeois republicanism; the anticlerical attack on the Church; and what a German writer had called *Verjudung*, the "Jewing" of society. For the great traitor to be the first Jew ever to serve on the general staff seemed too good to be true (as indeed it proved). But equally, when the frame-up and subsequent prolonged conspiracy to conceal it came to light, the Dreyfusards found this a very convenient cudgel with which to belabor their clerical foes.

Salman Rushdie was almost as natural a hate figure for British conservatives as Dreyfus had been for French reactionaries. Everything about Rushdie's history and personality make him obnoxious to many Englishmen. He was born in India to a Muslim family who emigrated to Pakistan in 1964. Three years earlier he had been sent to England to be educated at Rugby and King's, Cambridge. He didn't enjoy it. At school, he has said, "I had a pretty hideous time from my own age group: minor persecutions and racist attacks which felt major at the time. . . . I never had any friends at school, and I don't now know a single person I was at school with." He admits that this had something to do with being unathletic: "Indians and Pakistanis at Rugby had no trouble if they were good at games." His enemies might say that it also had something to do with his personality, and Tebbit surmised that "such taunts are suffered by those having any distinguishing mark" and "we mostly shrug them off." He continued, "But not Rushdie, for whom they became the chips he has carried through life." Rushdie was happier at Cambridge, but remained sullen and thin-skinned. In England those are high crimes and misdemeanors. In our modest way, we like people who like us and tell us how likable we are. We admire people who are uncomplaining in the face of adversity, including our own maltreatment of them. We very much

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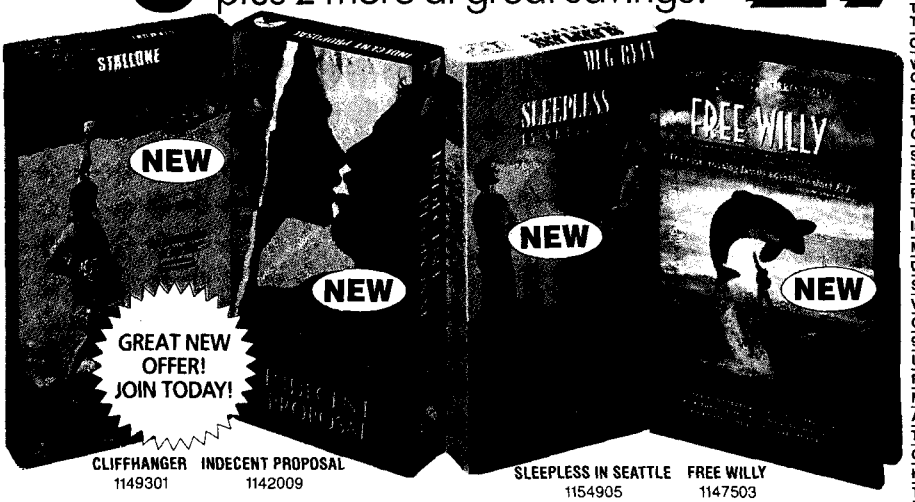

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dislike those who complain and answer back, like Salman Rushdie.

He answered back and he complained, again and again. He seemed cocky and chippy (that essential Englishism, from "chip on the shoulder"), arrogant and resentful at once. Sometimes he didn't seem to have much to complain about. He settled in London, married an Englishwoman, and worked quite successfully in advertising, where he showed a flair for language: he was the man who put the "bubble" into Aero chocolate—"delectabubble" and "incredibubble"—and called milk (rather implausibly) "naughty but nice." He published his first novel in 1975, which made no impact at all, and then hit the jackpot in 1981 with *Midnight's Children*, which won the Booker Prize and may still be his best novel. That made him one of the most prominent writers of his generation, a generation that includes Martin Amis, Julian Barnes, and Ian McEwan, and he indeed became part of their gang.

Mike Abrahams/Network/Matrix

Norman Tebbit, one of Margaret Thatcher's closest colleagues, described Rushdie as "despicable" and "an outstanding villain."

Now Rushdie was a celebrity, and like other literary celebrities he used his new fame as a platform for political pronouncement. In 1982 he gave a talk on the Channel 4 television station. "Britain is not South Africa," he began. "I am reliably informed of this. Nor is it Nazi Germany. I have that on the best authority as well." This somewhat leaden irony—"Auschwitz has not been rebuilt in the Home Counties"—introduced a fierce denunciation of present-day British racism, which Rushdie explained in terms of British imperial tradition: "Four hundred years of conquest and looting, centuries of being told you are superior to the fuzzy-wuzzies and the wogs, leave their stain on you all." British thought and British society "have never been cleansed of the Augean filth of imperialism." More than two million people living in Great Britain are immigrants, or the children of immigrants, who have arrived over the past forty years from what was once the Empire, mostly from the Indian subcontinent and the West Indies. These people constitute a new imported empire, in Rushdie's phrase, and are the victims of ineradicable and venomous British racism.

"This is not the England of fair play, tolerance, decency, and equality—maybe that place never existed anyway, except in fairy tales. In the streets of the new empire black women are abused and black children are beaten up on their way home from school. . . . Every major institution is permeated by racial prejudice to some degree. . . .We have a police force that harasses blacks every day of their lives. . . . It is believed that fifty percent of all telephone calls made by employers to employment agencies specify no blacks." As for "the call for 'racial harmony,'" that was no more than "an invitation to shut up and smile while nothing was done about our grievances." And "'multiculturalism' is just the latest token gesture towards Britain's blacks. It ought to be exposed—like 'integration' and 'racial harmony'—for the sham it is." As a final shaft, Rushdie cited Mahatma Gandhi, who was asked once what he thought of English civilization and replied, "I think it would be a good idea."

This is quoted at length because it explains (though it doesn't excuse) so much of the abuse that Rushdie attracted in his time of peril. Of the gloating critics mentioned, Waugh referred to that television talk directly and Tebbit indirectly when they came to spit on him. And the talk was indeed very silly. There is unquestionably a good deal of quiet—and sometimes noisy—racism in England. The trouble with Rushdie was that his transparent rhetoric and exaggeration actually weakened the case he was trying to make. That "fifty percent of telephone calls" is absurd, and few reporters who valued their reputation would have prefaced the claim with "It is believed."

And so all of this came back to haunt Rushdie in February of 1989. Plenty of people were quick to point out that Rushdie now depended for his life on the very "racist" police whom he had accused of harassing black people—an irony that must have struck even him. Auberon Waugh genially concluded that "it was not unreasonable," in the circumstances of Rushdie's having made several million pounds through insulting Islam, "to suggest that he should pay for any police protection he may judge advisable." (Although not, one imagines, because the advice came from that quarter, Rushdie has in fact paid a considerable sum to the British Treasury in acknowledgment of what his plight has cost the taxpayer.)

Behind this in turn lay another agenda, none too heavily disguised. The patriotic or nativist right in England has always resented the postwar immigration from the Commonwealth, and predicted dire consequences. With the life of a British subject threatened because of something he had written, with vast and violent demonstrations in London, with book burnings in Bradford, the consequences seemed dire enough. When Kalim Siddiqui, the director of the Muslim Institute in London, warmly endorsed the *fatwa* against Rushdie—"this man should be put away"—and called for a separatist "Parliament" for British Muslims, conservatives could taunt their enemies with the results of their supposed handiwork. "The liberals made their multi-cultural bed," Worsthorne wrote. "Now they must lie on it, along with the rest of us."

THOSE were the ranks of the anti-Rushdieites. If this had been a rerun of the *Affaire*, the Rushdieites would have formed equal and opposite ranks to defend him. Some writers did take up his cause, Norman Mailer and Martin Amis, among others, eloquently defending their fellow novelist. And even if there can be something a little irritating about the collective narcissism of literary folk, there is no need to doubt the sincerity of the "Dear Salman" letters of support written by Nadine Gordimer, Paul Theroux, and Günter Grass. But whereas enlightened and liberal France had once lined up solidly behind Dreyfus, this time the ranks were broken.

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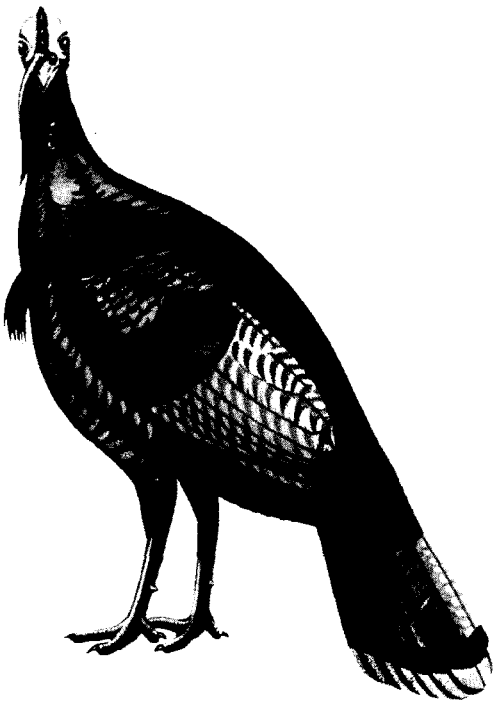

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There were several reasons for this. The truth is that Rushdie doesn't irritate only rightists or nativists. Before the *fatwa* he was quite widely disliked. There were endless tales (true, false, or, as is most likely in these cases, exaggerated in the telling) of his rudeness and arrogance, breaking up dinner parties or storming out of literary meetings where he hadn't been treated seriously enough. Even when he was in hiding, the denigration continued. *Esquire* ran a notably sneering profile—more of an obitchery—early last year. All of which sounds like anonymous smearing, but when a man's wife joins in, the denigration may seem more plausible. Rushdie's second wife was the American writer Marianne Wiggins. Their marriage broke up while he was in hiding, and she loyally added that "he's not the bravest man in the world but will do anything to save his life." Personal dislike shines through another eminent woman's verdict that Rushdie was a "megalomaniac." That was the word chosen by Germaine Greer, who explained, "I refuse to sign petitions for that book of his, which was about his own troubles."

Even those who might be called objective Rushdieites tended to offer support with gritted-teeth reluctance and confusions. Conor Cruise O'Brien argued against any compromise with murderous fundamentalism or any concessions to Iran, but this although "I am not an admirer either of Salman Rushdie or of his book. . . . The world of letters would be no whit the worse if *The Satanic Verses* were to disappear." Another normally sane commentator, William Pfaff, of the *Los Angeles Times*, wrote wearily a few months ago that "Mr. Rushdie has become something of a bore, if a truly unfortunate one. . . . he has since made a career of his victimization. . . . His conduct is perfectly understandable, but has not been entirely edifying." This was the tone of many other reluctant Rushdieites: irritable and blasé, obliged to defend free speech but fed up with the issue that presented itself in the form of this obnoxious and troublesome writer and his "unreadable" book (a word used in the British press too often to count). Again, all of this illuminates the reactions to the Affair, though, again, it doesn't excuse them. It should not have needed saying that the issue was incitement to murder, not Rushdie's personal character or the merits or demerits of his book.

Even half-hearted support was at any rate better than the deafening silence from many others who should have been Rushdieites. Some took the line that Rushdie had himself to blame. "Rushdie is a victim, but in my book no hero," John Le Carré wrote, wondering about "the extent to which Rushdie, perhaps inadvertently, provoked his own misfortune. . . . Absolute free speech is not a God-given right. . . . Nobody has a God-given right to insult a great religion." This line was endlessly repeated by people who themselves made a living from freedom of expression, but who thought that this concept of "insult" let them off an awkward hook.

There was, I think, no American equivalent of those venomous attacks made on Rushdie in England. But Robert Hughes has written scornfully of the way "American academics failed to collectively protest this obscenity," and gone on to explain why that was. Arguably at least,

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honorable reasons exist for not taking an unequivocal line in support of *The Satanic Verses*. As we stagger through life, there is much to be said for not hurting other people's feelings, and in any case no Westerner can really understand Islam, though he can recognize that Islamic civilization has a long and noble history (not, unfortunately, seen to much better advantage under the ayatollahs or Saddam Hussein than Christian civilization was under Hitler or Franco). Rushdie's novel, and the reaction in the West, caused real grief and pain to many Muslims, not only brutal tyrants and bullies. I cannot explain this as well as it was explained by Rana Kabbani in her little book *Letter to Christendom*.

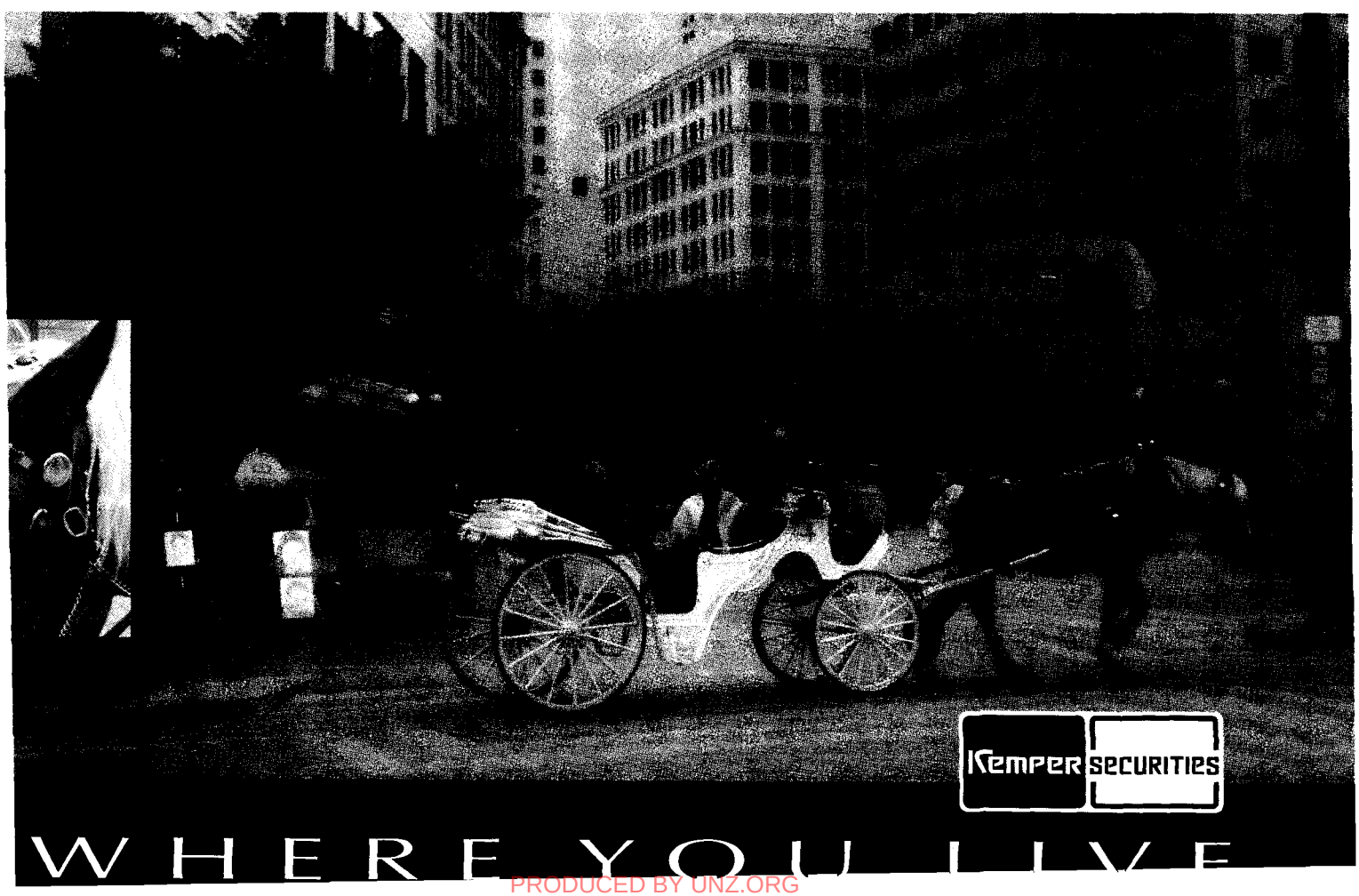
But it became much harder to take this line from those who weren't Muslims at all, but rather part of the Western liberal tradition. Here true faith—and good faith—faded, and gave way to something much nastier: cowardice, and patronizing "multiculturalism." As Hughes says, the silence of American academics over Rushdie is easily explained. They feared that their own campuses might become the targets of Islamic terrorists, but also, and much worse,

> the more politically correct among them felt it was wrong to criticize a Muslim country, no matter what it did. At home in America, such folk knew it was the height of sexist impropriety to refer to a young female as a "girl" instead of a "woman." Abroad in Teheran, however, it was more or less OK for a cabal of regressive theocratic bigots to insist on the chador, to cut off thieves' hands and put out the eyes of offenders on TV, and to murder novelists as State policy. Oppression is what we do in the West. What they do in the Middle East is "their culture."

The same perils of PC or multicultural "sensitivity" were illustrated in England by three men—a prince, a scholar, and a politician. Taking time off from his other tribulations, the Prince of Wales said that he had no sympathy for someone "who sets out to offend people's deepest convictions," which would seem to rule out much if not most intellectual and political discourse. Still, the prince can't really be called an intellectually eminent figure. Michael Dummett can. He is a former Wykeham Professor of Logic at Oxford, the leading interpreter of the mathematical and linguistic philosophy of Gottlob Frege, and one of the cleverest men alive. He has also dedicated part of his life to the cause of anti-racism, working on the Oxford Committee for Racial Integration, the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants. At one time he was often found at Heathrow Airport looking out for Asian and African immigrants who were being badly treated by officials. Now see where he was led by the road paved with these good intentions.

A year after the *fatwa* Rushdie published a long essay, "In Good Faith." It was his *apologia pro vita sua*, and an attempt to explain his book in a way that might soothe feelings. It wasn't good enough for Dummett. "It is, in my view," he replied,

> a disgusting thing to defile what other men regard as holy. . . . Those in the West who have no religious belief are oblivious to the depth of pain caused



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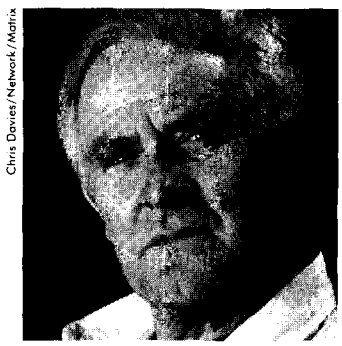
to those who have by what they perceive as blasphemy.

This last is true enough, and there is an amusing subtext here. As well as a logician, Professor Dummett is a devout Catholic convert. No doubt this gives him an insight into the psychology of religious belief. And yet, not long ago the Pope of Rome and his followers regarded Mahometanism as their deadliest historical foe. Nowadays these guys stick together, so that we have the rich spectacle of Rushdie's being denounced as a blasphemer by *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper; by John Cardinal O'Connor of New York, who told his flock that reading *The Satanic Verses* would be "very foolish"; and by Patrick Buchanan.


Chris Davies/Network/Matrix

"Rushdie is a victim, but in my book no hero," John Le Carré said. "Nobody has a God-given right to insult a great religion."

But blasphemy wasn't Dummett's real point. That was much more revealing. He told Rushdie that before *The Satanic Verses* was published,

> You were a hero among members of the ethnic minorities, far beyond the circle of those who had read your books, for your forceful television broadcast denouncing British racism. . . . It was your status as a hero that made your book appear such a betrayal. Much as you might want to, you can never again play that role: you can never again credibly assume the stance of denouncer of white prejudice. For now you are one of us. You have become an honorary white.

In other words, Rushdie had let the side down, and expelled himself from Dummett's version of politically and ethnically correct society. If there were a prize for the single most contemptible thing written about the Rushdie Affair, it would be a hotly contested field, but Dummett's open letter would be my nomination.

A runner-up might be the remarks of Roy Hattersley. The deputy leader of the Labour Party from 1983 to 1992 (and a considerably cleverer and more gifted man than Neil Kinnock, whose deputy he was), he is a senior opposition politician, a columnist and a novelist, and, as he would like to think, a man of the best liberal-left instincts. He also sits for a parliamentary constituency in Birmingham with a large Asian and Muslim population that influences what he says and does, and, to be fair, that's politics. A congressman from the West Side of Manhattan doesn't waste his breath attacking Israel, or one from South Boston deploring the excesses of Irish republicanism, and you don't expect them to. Even by those standards, however, Hattersley's performance was ignominious. He squirmed and wriggled as he tried to avoid the issue, which was not the right of Muslims to practice their religion in England but whether that included the right to suppress impious books and exterminate apostate authors. In Hattersley's view,

> Salman Rushdie's rights as an author are absolute and ought to be inalienable. A free society does not ban books. . . . But it is preposterous to pretend that the first principle governing the publication of *Satanic Verses* is the last word on the subject. . . . Mr Rushdie is entitled to abuse the religion in which he was reared and must be protected against those who want to intimidate him into silence. [Guess the conjunction] But the idea that we all have a duty to applaud his calculated assault is a novel interpretation of the liberal obligation.

Then, like Dummett, Hattersley tried to muddy the waters by confusing religion and race: "The proposition that Muslims are welcome in Britain if, and only if, they stop behaving like Muslims is incompatible with the principles of a free society. Indeed, that proposition can only be described as racist."

Once again, this showed just what lamentable turns multiculturalism and anti-racism can take. Anyone not scared witless by the word "racism" can surely see that freedom of religion in a free society means some things, but not others. Roman Catholics are free to abstain from birth control, but not to burn heretics at the stake. Muslims are free to practice their traditional religion, but not to execute apostates. As for the confusion of race and religion, the crucial distinction was once made by W. H. Auden. He was writing admiringly about G. K. Chesterton but deploring his anti-Semitism and his attempt to explain away his collective criticism of Jews:

> The disingenuousness of this argument is revealed by the quiet shift from the term *nation* to the term *race*. It is always permissible to criticize a nation (including Israel), a religion (including Orthodox Judaism), or a culture, because these are the creations of human thought and will: a nation, a religion, a culture can always reform themselves, if they so choose. A man's ethnic heritage, on the other hand, is not in his power to alter.

Not content with blurring proper distinctions, Hattersley—hilariously, for a man of his literary and intellectual pretensions—went on to argue that the existing English law of blasphemy should be widened to include religions other than Christianity. (Michael Dummett had proposed this also, and so had many others.) It would be a waste of space to rebut this weird argument. But the argument is interesting because it suggests a comparison.

Twelve years before the *fatwa* there was another *cause célèbre* in England, the *Gay News* case. In 1976 that magazine published a poem, "The Love That Dares to Speak Its Name," by the English writer James Kirkup. It was a fantasy in which the Roman centurion who lifted Christ from the Cross made love with his dead body afterward. A private prosecution was brought by Mary Whitehouse, a lone crusader against pornography and profanity, and in 1977 *Gay News* was convicted of blasphemous libel (which preposterous verdict was preposterously upheld on appeal and in the House of Lords).

On that occasion liberal opinion was unanimous in its condemnation of the tri-

(Continued on page 38)

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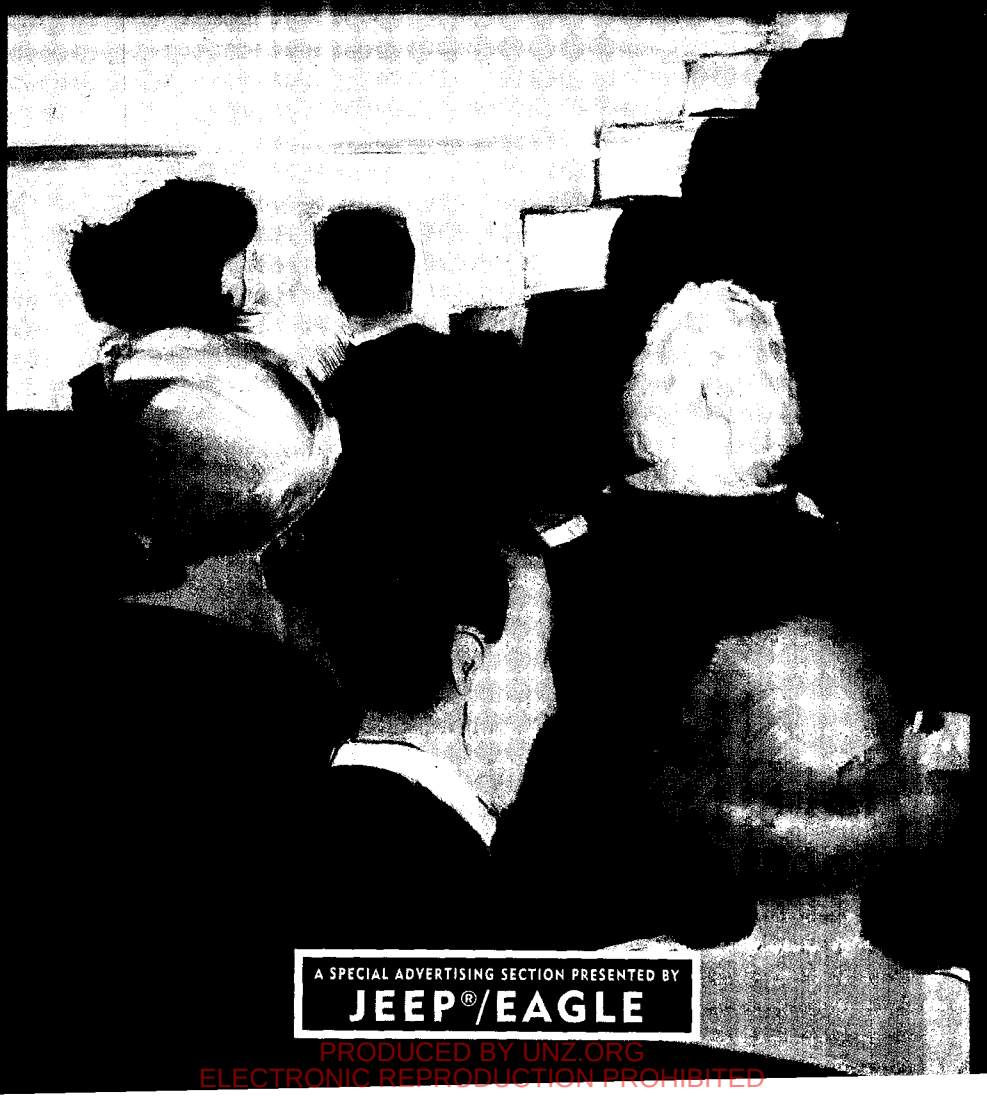
Arts & ENTERTAINMENT PREVIEW



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Film

BY ELLA TAYLOR

ELLA'S LAUDS...

It's time for my hopelessly inaccurate Academy Award predictions. Any resemblance to actual Oscar nominations, living or dead, is contentedly wishful.

Best Picture: *The Piano.* Jane Campion comes of age with a gorgeous film that makes all your nerve endings get up and dance. Campion brings a delirious perversity to the story of a mute Scotswoman who travels to New Zealand to marry a dried-up bachelor, and ends up playing musical beds with Harvey Keitel.

MIRAMAX FILMS

The Piano

Runners-Up: Mike Leigh's *Naked*, a brilliantly loquacious British bummer about fear and loathing in the scabbiest London you ever saw; Victor Nunez's quietly lyrical *Ruby in Paradise*, about a young southern woman getting by in deepest Florida; *Schindler's List*, Steven Spielberg's haunting adaptation of Thomas Keneally's Holocaust novel.

Best Actress: Newcomer Ashley Judd, for her openhearted performance, absolutely without intent to seduce us, in *Ruby in Paradise.*
Runners-Up: Four actresses who steered around their beauty to play women to be reckoned with—Holly Hunter, in *The Piano*; Gong Li, as the activist pregnant villager in *The Story of Qiu Ju* and the jealous former prostitute in *Farewell, My Concubine*; Debra Winger, as the lethally truthful Tupperware collector in *A Dangerous Woman* and the divorcee who awakens Anthony Hopkins in *Shadowlands*; Angela Bassett, for her intense Tina Turner in *What's Love Got to Do With It?*

ANDREW MACPHERSON

Day-Lewis

Best Actor: David Thewlis, for his gabby pyrotechnics as the misanthrope in *Naked.*
Runners-Up: Daniel Day-Lewis, for dissolving into the callow Irishman accused of terrorism in *In the Name of the Father*; Tom Hanks, for mustering the guts and the range to play the yuppie gay lawyer with AIDS in *Philadelphia*; Colm Meaney (of *The Commitments*), for his beleaguered Dublin father in *The Snapper*; Richard Gere, for his unsung performance as the jittery manic-depressive in the otherwise silly *Mr. Jones.*

Best Supporting Actress: Joanne Woodward, who hardly says a word but speaks volumes of pain with her face as Tom Hanks's mother in *Philadelphia.*
Runners-Up: Miriam Margolyes, for jollying up the snoreful *The Age of Innocence* as the canny old aunt overrun by yapping pups; Madeleine Stowe, for showing Tim Robbins what's what in *Short Cuts*; Judith Malina, for the long-faced mother-in-law whom Tracey Ullman learns to respect in *Household Saints.*

Ralph Fiennes

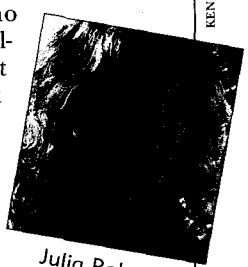
Best Supporting Actor: Ralph Fiennes, for his harrowing performance as the sadistic, tortured commandant of the Plaszow labor camp in *Schindler's List.*
Runners-Up: Denzel Washington, for the attorney torn between homophobia and justice in *Philadelphia*; Tommy Lee Jones, for his reluctant decency as the cop chasing Harrison Ford in *The Fugitive*; Pete Postlethwaite, for the good-hearted but ineffectual father in *In the Name of the Father*; Ben Kingsley, for his straight-man gravity as Oskar Schindler's Jewish accountant in *Schindler's List.*

And **The Posthumous Praise Award** goes to the fabulous Myrna Loy, who spoke some of the best dialogue in film history in *The Thin Man*, and proved that banter is sexier than sweet nothings.

Ella Taylor is a film columnist for Mirabella.

...AND LAMENTATIONS

The Trembling Lip Award goes to Alan J. Pakula, director of *The Pelican Brief*, who turned Julia Roberts's brilliant young law student into a pre-shrunk violet with a specialty in mournful gazing into the middle distance.

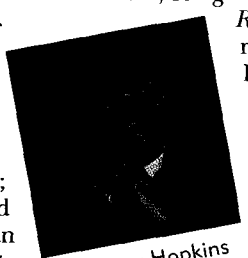


KEN REGAN

Julia Roberts

The History Made Simple Award goes to Oliver Stone, for his reading of Vietnamese history ("And then one day the French came") in *Heaven and Earth.*

The Magnificently Missed Point Award goes to National Public Radio's *Morning Edition*, for greeting the release of *The Remains of the Day* with a report on the training of English butlers.



KEITH HAMSHERE

Anthony Hopkins

The From Ham to Clam Award goes to Anthony Hopkins. His smart-ass showstopper as Hannibal Lecter got the job done. But the painfully repressed men he played in *The Remains of the Day* and *Shadowlands*—now *that* was acting.

The Go to Your Womb Award for best authoritarian personality goes to Snow White in Disney's re-release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.* That Snow, bossing the little fellows around—talk about a dominatrix.

The Women Who Run With the Sharks Award goes to top studio producer Sherry Lansing. *Fatal Attraction* wasn't enough; she saddled us with *Indecent Proposal*, in which Robert Redford purchases Demi Moore for $1 million, while Woody Harrelson puts in his own bid by buying her a hippo.

DAVID JAMES

Harrelson and Moore in *Indecent Proposal*

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Popular Music and Jazz

BY BOB BLUMENTHAL AND CHARLES M. YOUNG

KEYS AND CONVERSATION

Almost every important pianist who has been around in the past fifteen years has shared stories and music with Marian McPartland on her National Public Radio series *Piano Jazz*. The program's format, part oral history and part performance clinic, has created an ongoing chronicle of the jazz keyboard that encompasses everyone from the ragtime tunesmith Eubie Blake to the free-form godfather Cecil Taylor.

Marian McPartland

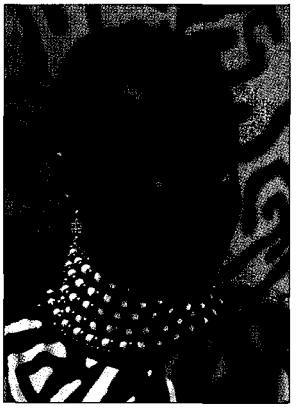
JAZZ ALLIANCE

Some of McPartland's best shows started appearing last year as individual CDs on the Jazz Alliance label, and they make effective hour-long summaries of influential lives and styles. These are not hard-hitting exposés—the host's British courtesy elicits polite chat rather than soul-baring confession—but McPartland is both savvy and sympathetic, and she keeps her guests focused on defining experiences while sustaining an admirable balance between talk and performance.

The first six volumes of Marian McPartland's *Piano Jazz* also display her willingness to bend the rules and include articulate nonpianists. Dizzy Gillespie, who plays both piano and trumpet on his installment, explains harmonic and rhythmic ideas in a manner that typifies the inquisitive intelligence of the leading modernists. Rosemary Clooney's recollections of early big-band gigs lead McPartland to plumb her own memory for a stunning impromptu performance of "My Silent Love." Eubie Blake, Teddy Wilson, Dave Brubeck, and Bill Evans are the pianists represented to date, with the verbal and musical interplay on the Evans volume producing especially telling insights. **—B.B.**

BENIN'S WORLD-BEAT PROPHETESS

Angelique Kidjo, speaker of eight languages, Catholic, animist, feminist, native of Benin, and resident of Paris, embodies a breadth of influences that is stunning even for the World Beat movement. Though she prefers to sing in Fon, the language of southern Benin, her approach to music adamantly rejects a "roots" style, incorporating everything the contemporary recording studio and contemporary musicianship can offer. On her latest album, *Ayé* (Island), the result is a spirited hybrid of jazz and pop familiar in instrumentation, exotic in percussion, and thoroughly inspiring in vocals. Kidjo's shimmering alto projects such power that the literal meaning of the words just doesn't matter. That's true of most good music, but especially so of this. With a little less musical ability, Kidjo might be off somewhere leading a revolution.



Angelique Kidjo

KATE GARNER

In translation Kidjo's lyrics reveal a greater concern with politics and justice than with romance and relationships. Her love for Africa comes inextricably mixed with rage at the vast historical forces that have spread so much suffering throughout her home continent (which she has toured extensively). In "Agolo" ("Please") she can sing of the "God of love and tenderness" and counsel against despair. But in "Azan Nan Kpe" ("A Day Will Come") her vision is reminiscent of the Old Testament prophets: "Someone forces the people together to indoctrinate them / Someone forces the people together to kill them / A day will come / And nothing and nobody will stop the people rising up / It will be such a shock that the earth will tremble." Until that day the closest thing to the earth's trembling is Angelique Kidjo's voice. **—C.M.Y.**

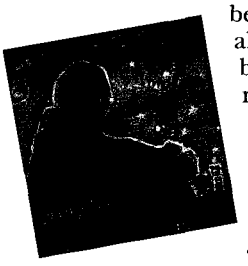
TRUDELL'S TRUTH

The national chair of the American Indian Movement in the 1970s, John Trudell began his writing career after a fire, probably set by an arsonist, killed his wife and three children in 1979. By the mid-eighties he was recording with various rhythmic and musical accompaniments. The effect of the music—parallel to but unlike rap—was oddly calming. He didn't sing, shout, or scream. He recited poetry, mixing his dignified voice well over the instruments. The words came first, and there was no mistaking their message in "...But This Isn't El Salvador" and "Bombs Over Baghdad."

John Trudell

BETH HERZHAFT

On his latest album, *Johnny Damas and Me* (Rykodisc), Trudell continues his apocalyptic political commentary, encouraging others to join in on "Rant n Roll" ("Say what you mean / Mean what you say / Rant n roll / When you feel that way"). The album then takes a surprising turn into feminist and personal concerns with several songs on softer themes: love and friendship; the psychological wounds that time never heals. Accompaniment varies from chimey folk rock to heavy metal to Native American chants. The balance—between the personal and the political, between music and recitation—holds throughout. Imagine a Sioux Lou Reed ranting and rolling about being sacrificed "on the altar of democracy," and you have John Trudell—easy to listen to even as he provokes your conscience. **—C.M.Y.**



RYKODISC

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe *and* CD Review.
Charles M. Young is a New York–based writer.

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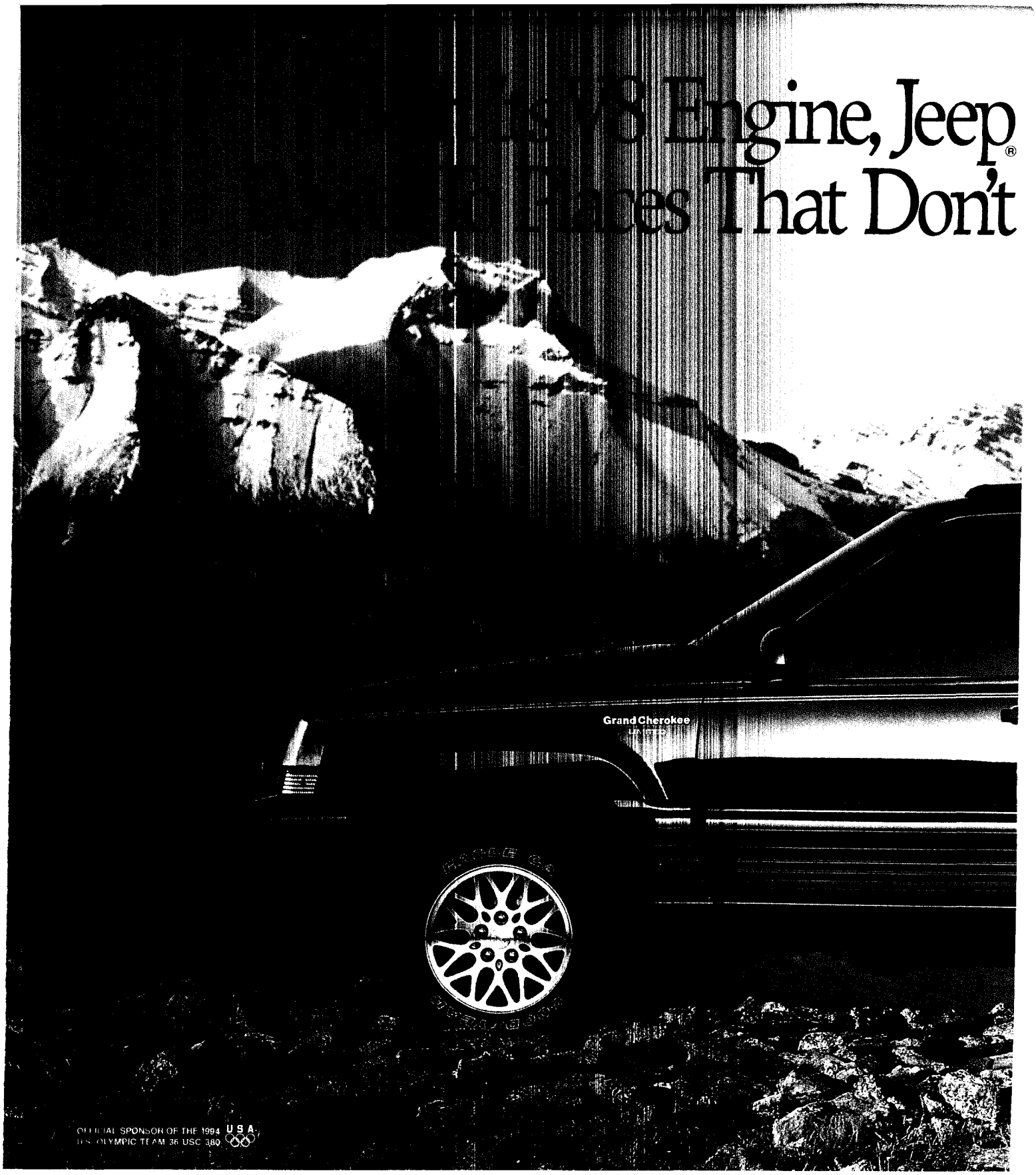

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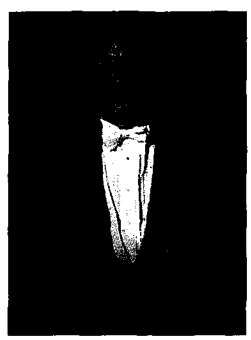
Classical Music

BY AUSTIN BAER

THE MANY SIDES OF DENNIS RUSSELL DAVIES

Among several splendid interpretations offered so far this season by Kurt Masur's revitalized New York Philharmonic, none shines more radiantly in memory than Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* under the dancing baton of the American maestro Dennis Russell Davies. This is not music in which the habitué expects revelations, nor did Davies impose any self-conscious point of view. The glory lay in the clarity, the lift, the grace, the vibrant poise. (And for listeners who hear with their eyes as well as their ears, the maestro's stick technique—fleet, legible, and free of needless ornament—resembled a master's calligraphy.) Besotted as this country remains with foreign pedigrees, Davies has yet to ignite his compatriots as his talent warrants. A friend and champion of living composers, he has had most of his opportunities here as an unsung (if indispensable) operative called in for the launch of such high-profile premieres as William Bolcom's *McTeague* and Philip Glass's *Orphée*. This month, however, a tour by the Beethovenhalle Orchestra of Bonn, which Davies heads, gives a broader view of his musical horizons: the programs run from Beethoven and Brahms to Schnittke, Wuorinen, and Glass. In March there are thirteen ports of call: College Station and Texarkana, Texas; Helena, Arkansas; Joplin and Liberty, Missouri; Des Moines; Chicago; Muncie, Indiana; Toledo; Utica, New York; Somerville, New Jersey; New York City; and Hartford, Connecticut. (Call 212-580-5527 for dates and ticket information.)



Dennis Russell Davies

JEFFREY HENSON SCALES

FIGARO AND IAGO: ITALIENS À LA RUSSE

Since establishing himself in the West three years ago, the baritone Vladimir Chernov (formerly of the Kirov Opera, St. Petersburg) has acquired no fewer than a dozen tragic leading roles in Verdi operas, which he has sung in velvet tones with heart, passion, and deep understanding. The latest is Stankar, avenger of his daughter's tarnished honor in the long-neglected *Stiffelio*, resurrected this season at the Metropolitan Opera. Four final performances (March 2–12, with a live Texaco broadcast of the matinee on March 5) afford an opportunity to witness Chernov's admired portrayal, complete with the unconventional vengeance aria, sung *pianissimo*, as written. The first Stankar, an artist past his prime, could not sustain the full-throated outcry the situation seems to demand, so Verdi spared him. As it turns out, the counterintuitive solution sounds especially striking in the voice of a singer in the fullness of his powers.

After that, for a change, Chernov laughs! The vehicle: *The Barber of Seville*, in the title role of which he has won ovations in Vienna, Brussels, London, and Seattle. Surely the Met audience will surrender too (six performances from March 15 to April 7; Met box office 212-362-6000). Meanwhile, Chernov's Kirov colleague Sergei Leiferkus, best known as a dangerous, moody Slavic operator (Rangoni, in *Boris Godunov*), a dandy (Eugene Onegin), a rakehell (Tomsky, in *The Queen of Spades*), and a madman, (Tchaikovsky's Maseppa), gives America a first taste of his Italian as Iago in the Met's new production of Verdi's *Otello* (opening March 21, with a live broadcast of the matinee on April 2). As an encore, Leiferkus offers a recital at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall (March 27, 212-875-5050), another occasion for spreading his brilliant and diabolical colors. His is a more biting, metallic timbre than Chernov's, and a more neurotic sensibility. Choosing between them is impossible.

Stiffelio

WINNIE KLOTZ

CATHARTIC SORROW

Joanna Kozlowska

SHAW CONCERTS

Given humankind's instinct to fly from pain, the universal taste for unmotivated lamentation is something of a puzzle. With or without the passing of a loved one to commemorate, the Requiems of Mozart and Verdi belong to the most beloved works of the concert repertoire. And why not? Never send to know for whom the bell tolls, Dr. Donne admonished long ago; it tolls for thee. There is always grief enough to go around, and maybe the communal expression of ultimate loss in some way reconciles us to lesser, everyday sorrows. If so, perhaps that explains the triumphant progress of Henryk Górecki's Symphony No. 3 (the *Symphony of Sorrowful Songs*) over the concert stages and sales charts of the world. The soprano Dawn Upshaw, soloist on the best-selling Nonesuch recording, has made a compelling case for Górecki's static solemnities in live performances, too—but to accommodate her slender tone, the orchestration has had to be reduced. At the San Francisco Symphony, the richer-voiced Joanna Kozlowska braves the instrumental sonorities at the plenitude the composer intended (March 30–April 2, 415-431-5400).

Austin Baer is a New York–based writer.

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The Atlantic Monthly
ONLINE

The Atlantic Monthly launched an electronic version of itself on the America Online computer network in November. The Atlantic Monthly Online includes a selection of articles taken directly from the magazine, and also a variety of offerings available only online: features about the magazine's history; profiles of current contributors; a message board for discussing topics raised in *Atlantic* articles; live electronic conferences with *Atlantic* editors and experts from various disciplines. Participation in America Online requires a computer, a mouse, and a modem. To request communications software and a password, call America Online, at 1-800-827-6364, extension 7982. New users are entitled to ten hours of free exploration.

RECENTLY ON THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY ONLINE:

- In February a live conference with William Langewiesche, an *Atlantic* contributing editor.
- Accompanying the February issue, special online "sidebars" from James Fallows, *The Atlantic*'s Washington editor, and Michael Sragow, the author of "David Lean's Magnificent *Kwai*."

(Continued from page 30)

al, in its support of the magazine, and in its contempt for Whitehouse. So it should have been. But fast-forward twelve years. Here is another, directly comparable case. We were regularly told, even by those who defended him, that Rushdie's book was "transgressive," that it was deliberately shocking, that it caused pain to Muslims. Was not Kirkup's poem equally transgressive? Did it not cause pain? At any rate, if Kirkup had tried publishing his poem 300 years ago in London or Rome, Moscow or Boston, the only question would have been by which disagreeable means he would be put to death.

Whitehouse is a marginal and irrelevant figure, but at the time of the decree against Rushdie, I wondered how liberals would have reacted to a Christian *fatwa*. Suppose some Anglican version of the Ayatollah—the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Christ Church, Oxford, perhaps—had pronounced a sentence of death on Kirkup. Would Michael Dummett have lectured Kirkup as he later did Rushdie: "If you really did not grasp the offense you would give . . . you were not qualified to write upon the subject"? Would he have told Kirkup to "repudiate what you did"? Or if the Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh had told all good Catholics to kill Edna O'Brien for the unforgivable insult to Catholic Ireland which her novels contained, would Hattersley have equivocated as he did, and ended with "Catholics are people too" (the actual, excruciating last words of his homily were "Muslims are people too")?

Of all the irritations and embarrassments of the Rushdie Affair—especially as compared with the Dreyfus *Affaire*—the most depressing was to see the way this obsession with not wanting on any account to do anything that could possibly be construed as "racist" had rotted too many liberals' minds, had left them unable to distinguish between the simplest right and wrong, and, just as bad, had reduced them to an abominably patronizing attitude toward non-European peoples and their cultures, for whom every possible excuse was made, in a way that effectively degraded and infantilized them.

FINALLY, there is Rushdie himself. He survived, he succeeded at last in adding the British Prime Minister and the American President to the leaders who have met him, he is greeted with rapturous enthusiasm wherever he speaks, he is (despite the shameful refusal of British Airways to fly him) surprisingly free to come and go within the constraints of permanent security. His life is in some ways like that of a modern head of state, in terms both of acclaim and of being permanently guarded—not a life many of us would choose, but politicians willingly do. Whatever else happens, Rushdie can claim to have won a large moral victory. And he still doesn't understand what has happened.

Like Dreyfus, he has been not only a reluctant victim but also a reluctant symbol. Obviously, Dreyfus didn't want to be framed and sent to Devil's Island, but more than that, he had no wish to become the central figure in the great *Affaire*. He was a well-to-do, complacent bourgeois with no particular interest in politics. And he was, in his own view, a Frenchman, *tout court*—no doubt a Frenchman of Jewish descent, but a Frenchman rather than a Jew. He never wanted to be cast by the anti-Semitic right as "le Juif," the eternal Jew. Nor did he in the least wish to become a symbol of the anticlerical, antimilitarist left throughout France and Europe. After his retrial and second false conviction, Dreyfus's reaction was to shout from the dock not *"Vive la République!"* but *"Vive l'Armée!"*

There is an echo of this in Rushdie's story. The irony of his being guarded by the "racist" British police whom he had recently denounced was so obvious that even the slowest-witted conservative could scarcely fail to spot it. And yet the real irony goes deeper. Let me start again, from another point. When I first heard of Salman Rushdie, around fifteen years ago, I didn't think of him as "Asian," or one of what progressive parlance used to call the colonial peoples, or what PC-speak now calls a person of color. I thought, Here is another British literary intellectual, even if he doesn't share one's own pinkish, blotchy complexion; here is a Rugbeian and Kingsman (like Rupert Brooke, of "some corner of a foreign field / That is for ever England," as it happens)—one of the lads, especially when he found his niche in London. This view may have been wrong, but I do not see how it can be thought racist or insulting.

That was not how Rushdie saw it,

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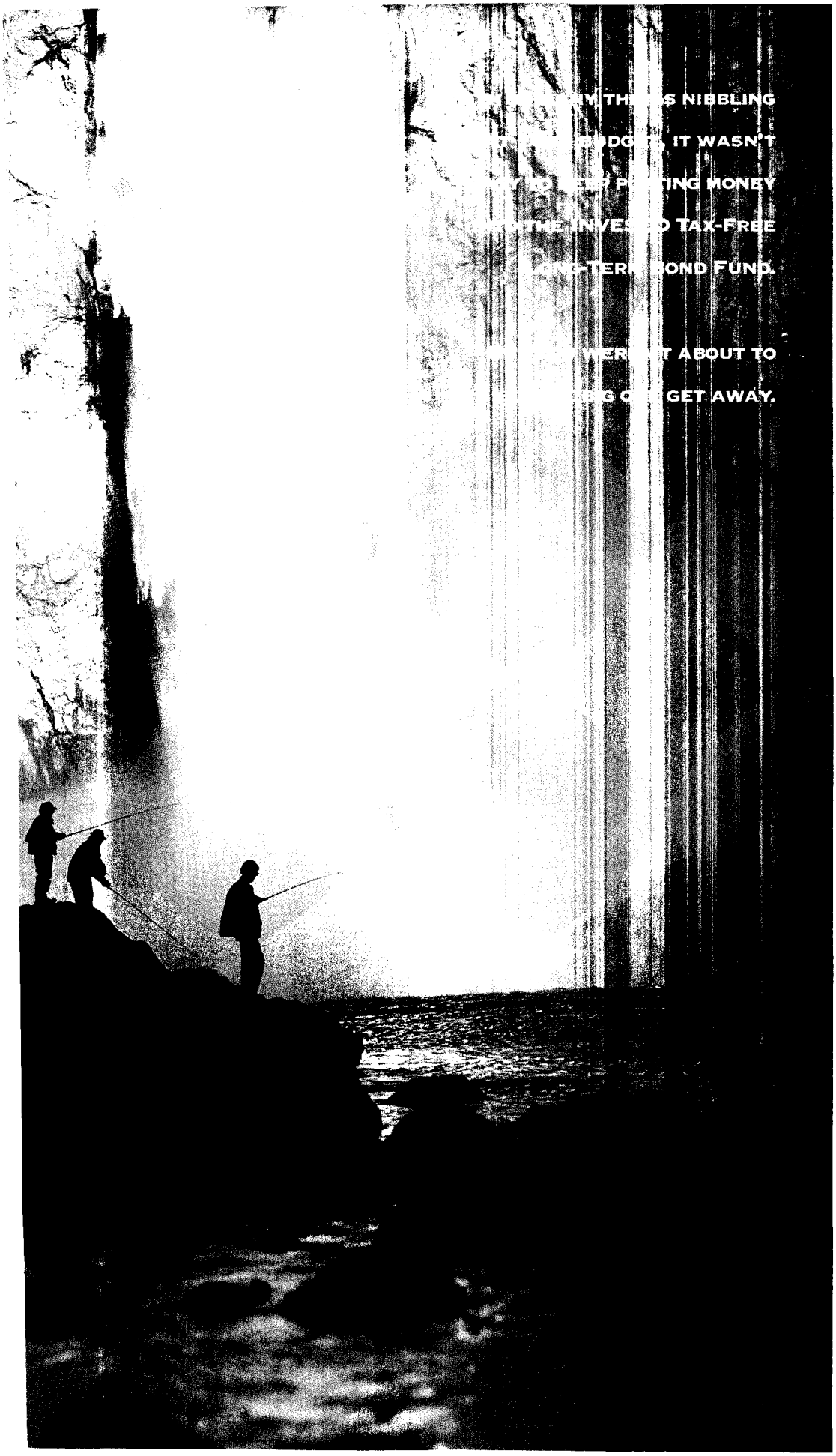

It doesn't take long before you realize it's not so much the little things that keep you from getting where you want to be. It's that huge tax bite you face every year.

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So if you have big plans you don't want to let get away, call for a prospectus for this fund. You'll receive more complete information, including management fees and expenses. Read it carefully before you invest or send money. INVESCO. Just one of the smart choices you've made.℠

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*Bonds rated "A" by Moody's Investors Service, Standard & Poor's Corporation, or Fitch Investors Service, are rated in the 3rd highest category available for high quality bonds.

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To treat symptomatic benign enlarged prostate:

Only one medicine can shrink the prostate.

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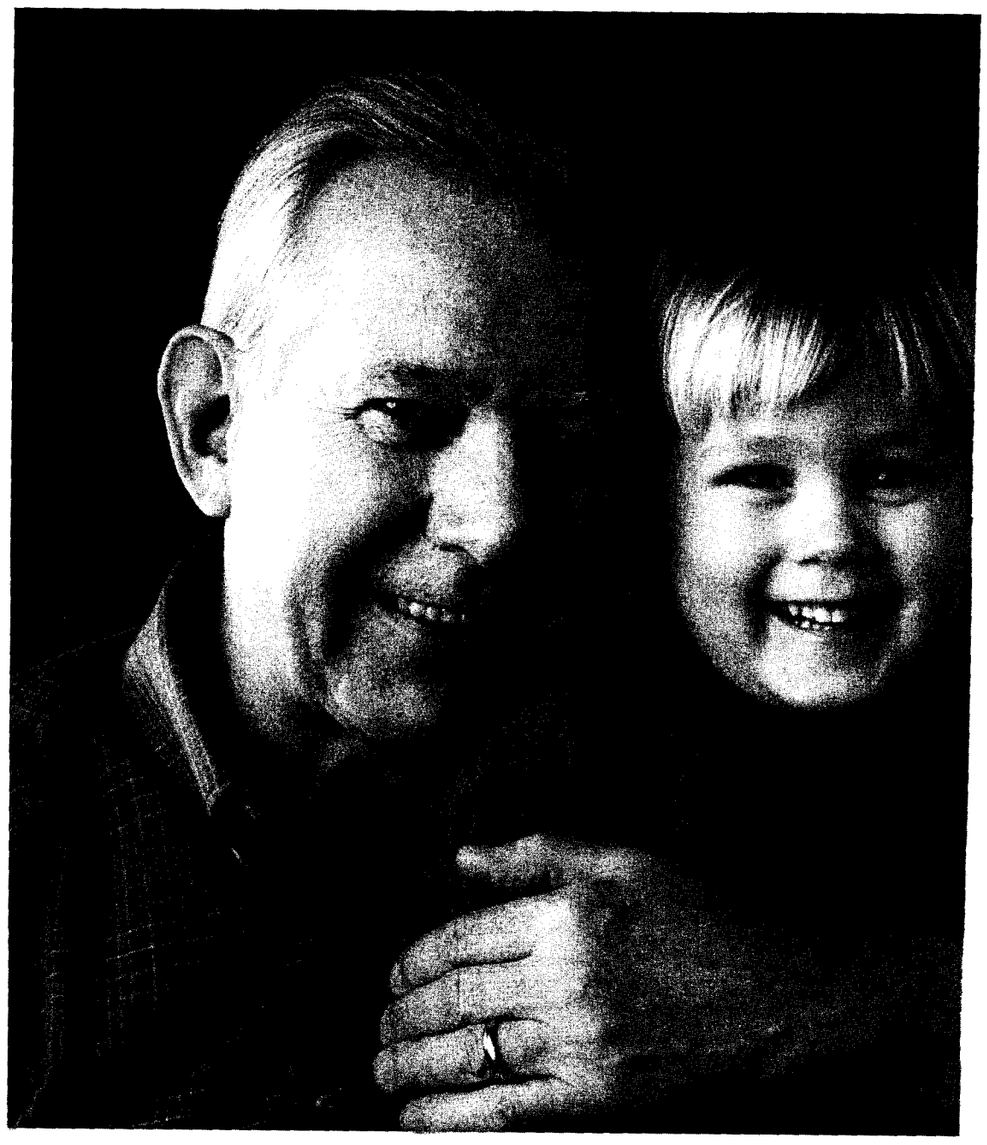
(FINASTERIDE)



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Until recently, there wasn't a medicine that could help the condition known as symptomatic benign prostate enlargement or BPH. But now there is PROSCAR, the first oral prescription medicine that can shrink an enlarged prostate.

However, it is important to know the following: PROSCAR *doesn't work for everyone. Even though your prostate may shrink, you may not see an improvement in urinary flow or symptoms. And you may need to take* PROSCAR *for 6 months or more to see whether it helps you.*

How PROSCAR can shrink an enlarged prostate.

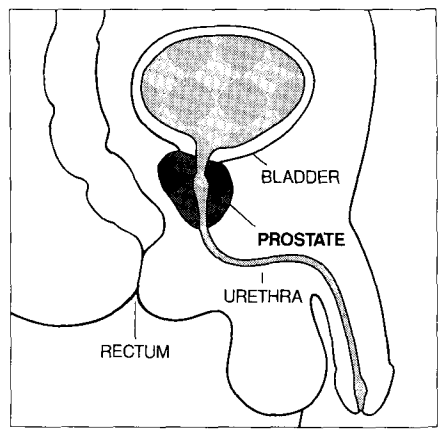
As a man ages, a key hormone can help cause the prostate to grow. PROSCAR actually blocks the production of this hormone, so it helps shrink the prostate to a smaller size in many men. As a result, some men treated with PROSCAR experience an increased urinary flow and an improvement in urinary symptoms.

Why you should see your doctor soon.

Your doctor has several options for the treatment of symptomatic BPH: watchful waiting (monitoring the condition with regular checkups), medication, or surgery. It's important to see your doctor because the problem doesn't usually get better by itself. In many cases, the prostate continues to enlarge and the symptoms may get worse. So if your urinary symptoms are bothering you, have your family doctor or a urologist assess your condition and ask if PROSCAR is an appropriate treatment for you.

It is also important to have regular checkups. *While benign prostate enlargement is not cancer and does not lead to cancer, the two conditions can exist at the same time.*

Remember, only a doctor can evaluate your symptoms and their possible causes. So, if your urinary symptoms are bothering you, don't wait any longer. You may find that your enlarged prostate can be made into a smaller problem.



The prostate surrounds part of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder. As the prostate enlarges, it can squeeze the urethra and cause urinary problems.

For more information about prostate enlargement and PROSCAR, call 1-800-635-4452 today.

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PATIENT INFORMATION ABOUT PROSCAR® (Prahs-car)
Generic name: finasteride (fin-AS-tur-eyed)

PROSCAR is for the treatment of symptomatic benign prostatic hyperplasia and for use by men only.

Your doctor may prescribe PROSCAR if you have a medical condition called benign prostatic hyperplasia or BPH. This occurs only in men.

Please read this information, as well as the leaflet which accompanies your medication, before you start taking PROSCAR. Also, read the leaflet each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss PROSCAR when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups.

What is BPH?

BPH is an enlargement of the prostate gland. After age 50, most men develop enlarged prostates. The prostate is located below the bladder. As the prostate enlarges, it may slowly restrict the flow of urine. This can lead to symptoms such as:

- a weak or interrupted urinary stream
- a feeling that you cannot empty your bladder completely
- a feeling of delay or hesitation when you start to urinate
- a need to urinate often, especially at night
- a feeling that you must urinate right away.

Treatment options for BPH

There are three main treatment options for BPH:

- **Program of monitoring or "Watchful Waiting".** If a man has an enlarged prostate gland and no symptoms or if his symptoms do not bother him, he and his doctor may decide on a program of monitoring which would include regular checkups, instead of medication or surgery.
- **Medication.** Your doctor may prescribe PROSCAR for BPH. See **"What PROSCAR does"** below.
- **Surgery.** Some patients may need surgery. Your doctor can describe several different surgical procedures for BPH. Which procedure is best depends on your symptoms and medical condition.

What PROSCAR does

PROSCAR lowers levels of a key hormone called DHT (dihydrotestosterone), which is a major cause of prostate growth. Lowering DHT leads to shrinkage of the enlarged prostate gland in most men. This can lead to gradual improvement in urine flow and symptoms over the next several months. However, since each case of BPH is different, you should know that:

- Even though the prostate shrinks, you may NOT see an improvement in urine flow or symptoms.
- You may need to take PROSCAR for six (6) months or more to see whether it helps you.
- Even though you take PROSCAR and it may help you, it is not known whether PROSCAR reduces the need for surgery.

What you need to know while taking PROSCAR

- **You must see your doctor regularly.** While taking PROSCAR, you must have regular checkups. Follow your doctor's advice about when to have these checkups.
- **About side effects.** Like all prescription drugs, PROSCAR may cause side effects. Side effects due to PROSCAR may include impotence (or inability to have an erection) and less desire for sex. Each of these side effects occurred in less than 4% of patients in clinical studies. In some cases side effects went away while the patient continued to take PROSCAR.

Some men taking PROSCAR® (Finasteride) may have a decrease in the amount of semen released during sex. This decrease does not appear to interfere with normal sexual function.

You should discuss side effects with your doctor before taking PROSCAR and anytime you think you are having a side effect.

- **Checking for prostate cancer.** Your doctor has prescribed PROSCAR for symptomatic BPH and not for cancer—but a man can have BPH and prostate cancer at the same time. Doctors usually recommend that men be checked for prostate cancer once a year when they turn 50 (or 40 if a family member has had prostate cancer). These checks should continue while you take PROSCAR. PROSCAR is not a treatment for prostate cancer.
- **About prostate specific antigen (PSA).** Your doctor may have done a blood test called PSA. PROSCAR can alter PSA values. For more information, talk to your doctor.
- **A warning about PROSCAR and pregnancy.**

PROSCAR is for use by MEN only.

PROSCAR is generally well tolerated in men. However, women who are pregnant, or women who could become pregnant, should avoid the active ingredient in PROSCAR.

If the active ingredient is absorbed by a woman who is pregnant with a male baby, it may cause the male baby to be born with abnormalities of the sex organs. Therefore, any woman who is pregnant or who could become pregnant must not come into direct contact with the active ingredient in PROSCAR.

Two of the ways in which a woman might absorb the active ingredient in PROSCAR are:

Sexual contact. Your semen may contain a small amount of the active ingredient of the drug. If your partner is pregnant, or if you and your partner decide to have a baby, you must stop taking PROSCAR and talk to your doctor. If your partner could become pregnant, proper use of a condom can reduce the risk of exposing her to your semen (discuss this further with your doctor).

Handling broken tablets. Women who are pregnant or who could become pregnant must not handle broken tablets of PROSCAR.

PROSCAR tablets are coated to prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling. If this coating is broken, the tablets should not be handled by women who are pregnant or who could become pregnant.

If a woman who is pregnant comes into contact with the active ingredient in PROSCAR, a doctor should be consulted. Remember, these warnings apply only if the woman exposed to PROSCAR is pregnant or could become pregnant.

How to take PROSCAR

Follow your doctor's advice about how to take PROSCAR. You must take it every day. You may take it with or between meals. To avoid forgetting to take PROSCAR, it may be helpful to take it the same time every day.

Do not share PROSCAR with anyone else; it was prescribed only for you.

Keep PROSCAR and all medicines out of the reach of children.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PROSCAR AND BPH, TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR. IN ADDITION, TALK TO YOUR PHARMACIST OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDER.

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however. He was—or claimed to be—a man of the Third World, and a tribune for its oppressed peoples. That was the implication of his television lecture, so eagerly lapped up by guilt-ridden Englishmen. That was Rushdie's unique selling proposition, that was what distinguished him from the other "magical realist" novelists of his generation. It would be a little unkind, but not really unfair, to say that he parlayed his Third Worldliness into a career. He kept up this attitude, or attitudinizing. In 1984 he wrote another political essay, "Outside the Whale" (like the date, the title echoed George Orwell, who wrote an essay "Inside the Whale"). It was an appeal to writers to commit themselves politically on the right—which is of course the left—side. And the terms in which it was written were to prove frighteningly ironic: "We may not approve of Khomeini's Iran. But the revolution there was a genuine mass movement." What if it was? Does the fact that a revolution is "a mass movement" excuse what is done in its name, from torture and executions to a *fatwa* issued against an apostate? People have sometimes lived to think better of their trite support for populist revolutions, but the lesson has rarely been learned in such a terrible way.

For some time after the *fatwa* Rushdie didn't know which way to turn, morally speaking. To begin with, he rejected the idea of blasphemy and apostasy on which the *fatwa* rested:

> To put it as simply as possible: *I am not a Muslim*. It feels bizarre, and wholly inappropriate, to be described as some sort of heretic after having lived my life as a secular, pluralist, eclectic man. I am being enveloped in, and described by, a language that does not fit me. I do not accept the charge of blasphemy, because, as someone says in *The Satanic Verses*, "where there is no belief there is no blasphemy."

This was in February, 1990. By December, Rushdie had changed his mind on this subject, and announced his conversion (or reconversion) to Islam. It is all too easy to smile at this. His conversion might have been sincere; most of us suspected otherwise (didn't we?), and some of Rushdie's more reluctant supporters hitherto, such as Alexander Cockburn, chose this moment to jump ship.

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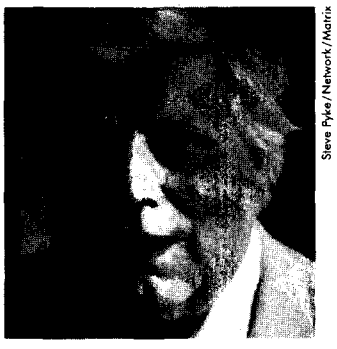
Since I have never been in that position —under sentence of death, and faced with the possibility of saving my life by a profession of religious zeal—I don't propose to join these critics.

But still Rushdie didn't understand the case. His earlier claim not to be a Muslim made sense in terms of his adoptive civilization and its culture; it made none in terms of the civilization and culture he claimed to have sprung from and to still belong to emotionally. Enlightened Western man can decide whether to have a faith or not, whether to accept or reject his own religious heritage. Islam does not understand or grant this possibility—any more than Christendom did in the days when it, too, put to death heretics and atheists and blasphemers. William Pfaff has phrased this well. The powerful modern Western tradition of skepticism has its own central value, which is to examine and if necessary attack all existing and established values: "Mr. Rushdie's potentially fatal error was to apply this modern European standard of discourse to a religion that still believes in itself."

This is illustrated even within the book in question. Among other things, *The Satanic Verses* is a social and political satire on England in the 1980s. It was published, appropriately enough, in 1988, the year the British liberal-left licked their wounds and regrouped after Margaret Thatcher's third consecutive election victory, the year when intellectual anti-Thatcherite groups were formed called Charter '88 (vaingloriously echoing the Czech Charter '77) and the 20 June Group. Rushdie joined this second group, a gathering of writers and media critics who met at the Holland Park salon of Harold Pinter and Lady Antonia Fraser. This was only an extension of the circles in which Rushdie had established himself, at the heart of fashionable literary London (and if the word "fashionable" sounds sneering and envious, I defy anyone who knows London to say it is untrue). These groups' political outlook was similar, and similarly right-on, with Margaret Thatcher the special object of their hatred. So it came naturally to Rushdie to call one of the characters in the novel "Mrs Torture," aka "Maggie the Bitch," and if anyone had so much as raised an eyebrow, the response would have been scornful: Can't you take a joke?

All the while Rushdie maintained his pretense of Third Worldliness. But pretense was what it was—as he now showed by writing the "Mahound" passages in *The Satanic Verses* in the same blithely satirical spirit as he wrote "Maggie the Bitch." Whatever he may have claimed to be theoretically, he demonstrated existentially that he was entirely cut off from his roots, entirely "evolved," as the French used to say of Europeanized colonial subjects, entirely Westernized in spirit. He not only applied the skeptical European tradition to a religion that still takes itself seriously; he quite forgot that in Qom and Islamabad there are people who just can't take a joke at all. And so the man who believed that he stood for Them—the oppressed of the Third World—found his life threatened by Them, while he was guarded by Us, with our "old colonial attitudes," bred of 400 years of conquest and looting.

Inevitably, he tried to deny the implications of this. While defending himself and his book, he insisted that "I have never seen this controversy as a struggle between Western freedoms and Eastern unfreedom." This was his equivalent of Dreyfus's *"Vive l'Armée!"* But Rushdie, like Dreyfus, was wrong. Whether Dreyfus liked it or not, his case *was* indeed a conflict between two cultures and two sets of values. Our own Affair over *The Satanic Verses* is similarly a *Kulturkampf* between two opposed sets of values, whether Rushdie likes it or not or knows it or not.


Steve Pyke/Network/Matrix

"You can never again credibly assume the stance of denouncer of white prejudice," Michael Dummett told Rushdie. "For now you are one of us."

That crack of Gandhi's that Rushdie quoted backfires. No doubt terrible things have been done in the name of "English civilization," not least in India. But whatever his words, Gandhi's deeds acknowledged its existence. You don't need much imagination to guess what would have happened to a policy of satyagraha, of passive resistance, employed against Stalin, Hitler, Mao—or the Ayatollah Khomeini. Gandhi and the other Congress leaders would simply have been rounded up and put to death, with or without benefit of show trial. Arrogant and harsh as the British rulers of India often were, they were inhibited from such repression by their own moral code, as Gandhi very well knew when he appealed to something in his rulers' hearts.

And so, finally, however little Rushdie wants it to be, his own story has been a tribute to the West, which he unmistakably belongs to, however much he affects to dislike it. He so much wanted not to belong to it. He kicked and struggled intellectually, but events told him the inexorable truth. He so much wanted to be something he wasn't, illustrating in an unusually bitter way Johnson's saying that the greater part of life's follies stem from the attempt to emulate that which we do not resemble. Rushdie thought he was a resemblance of Otherness, of non-Europeanness; he wasn't, he was a Westerner and an Englishman. He had so much enjoyed his role as a scourge of the West and of the adoptive country that really had become his home, spiritually as well as physically. And that role was so false. Much of what Michael Dummett said was silly or odious, but when he told Rushdie "Now you are one of us," he spoke truer than he or Rushdie knew.

In the end Dreyfus was acquitted and lived out his days peacefully. Just as I have hoped that every support will be given to Rushdie against the murderous fanatics who threaten him, I hope also that there can be some more or less happy resolution that allows him to live out his life in quiet and safety. But I wish too that he had understood from the beginning what was happening to him and what it meant. I wish I thought he did even now.

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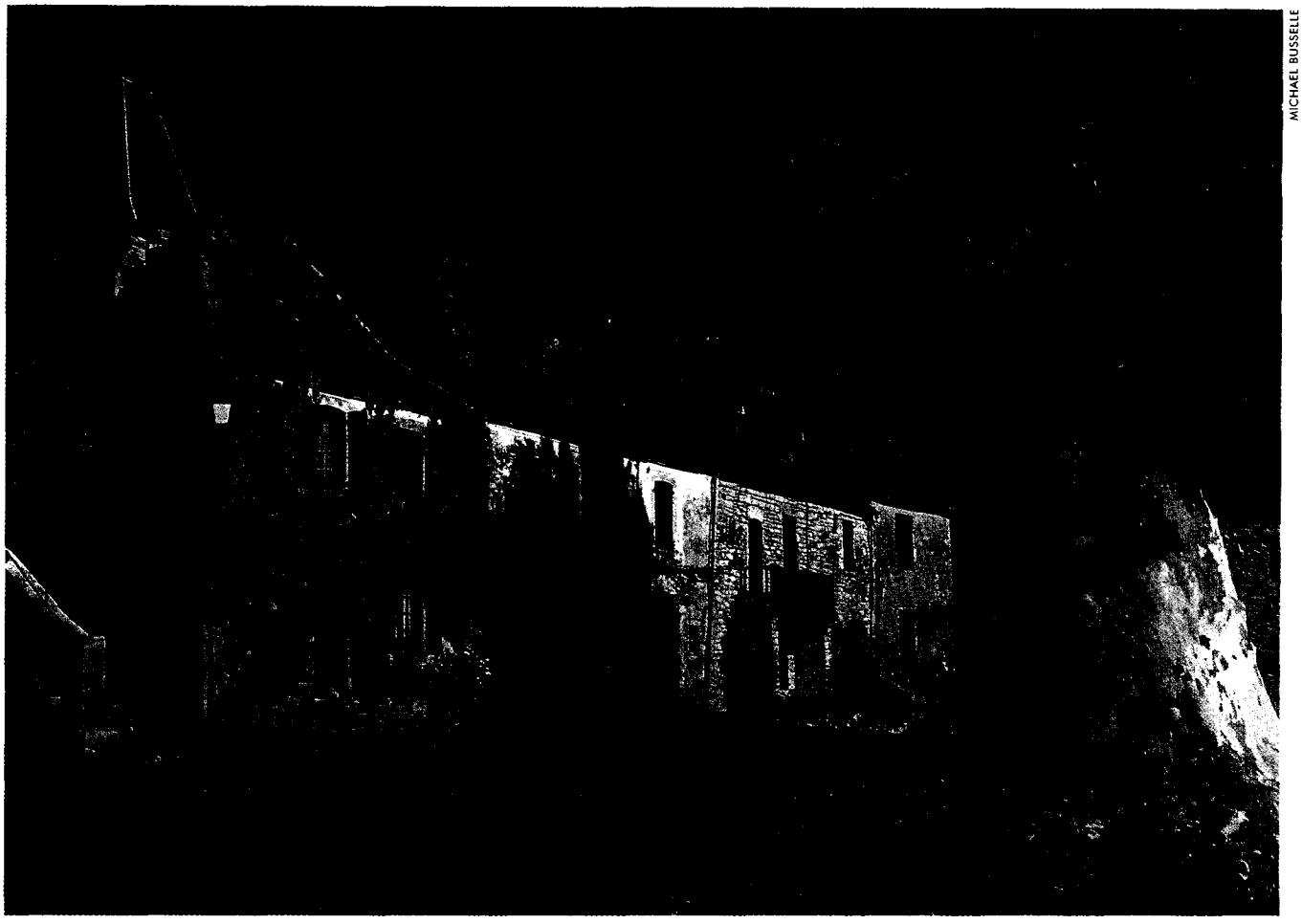

MICHAEL BUSSELLE

The handsome hilltop village of Loubressac, a mile from the stone farmhouse where the author stayed

In the Depths of France

The pleasures of renting a farmhouse and staying put

by Peter Davison

FOR ten years my wife and I have been yearning for the ideal vacation, whether in Europe, Central America, Asia, or the Caribbean—but each adventure lacked something. The exotic island turned lone and lorn; the bustle of the international metropolis did little for the inner life; the trail of temples hardly satisfied the wish for worldly pleasures; the exploration of a new region was rewarded by physical exhaustion. How to combine all the pleasures without suffering their attendant discomforts? How to arrive at solitude without isolation; to get off the beaten track without driving a car all day, day after day; to experience a change of scene and culture without alienation? And how to snatch a bit of rest and recreation at the same time?

To our great good fortune, a friend was willing last June to rent us his stone farmhouse in France, surrounded by climbing roses and beds of iris and wild herbs, in the Haut-Quercy region, *département* of the Lot, south of the Dordogne River and overlooking it, perched on the hills of a limestone upland left behind ages ago by the upheaval of an ocean floor. We decided to center ourselves in this house and stay very close to it, within a square of twenty-five kilometers. We knew the area to be the territory of Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon hunters, Gauls, Goths, and Albigensians—a rich, mild, desirable land that was fought over for centuries by everyone from the Saracens to the English until it was depopulated and still. At one time the market town of Gramat, central to the region today, was reduced by war and pestilence to a population of six. This is also the country of Montaigne, Fénelon, André Malraux, André Maurois, Madame de Pompadour, and Jean Lurçat; the country

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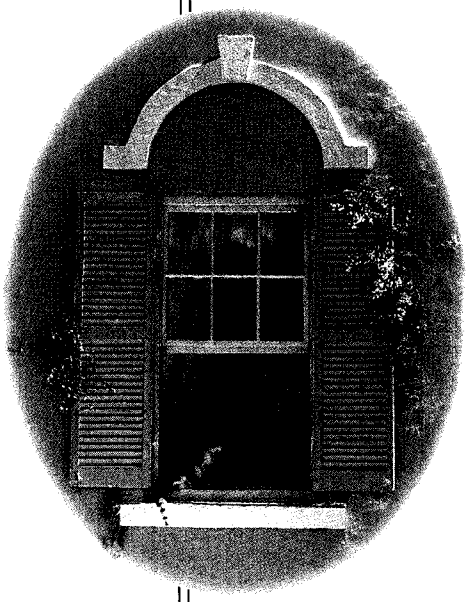

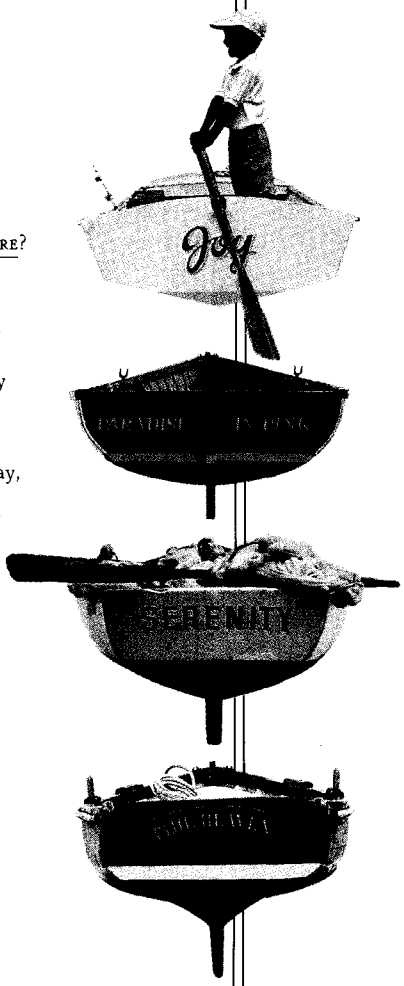

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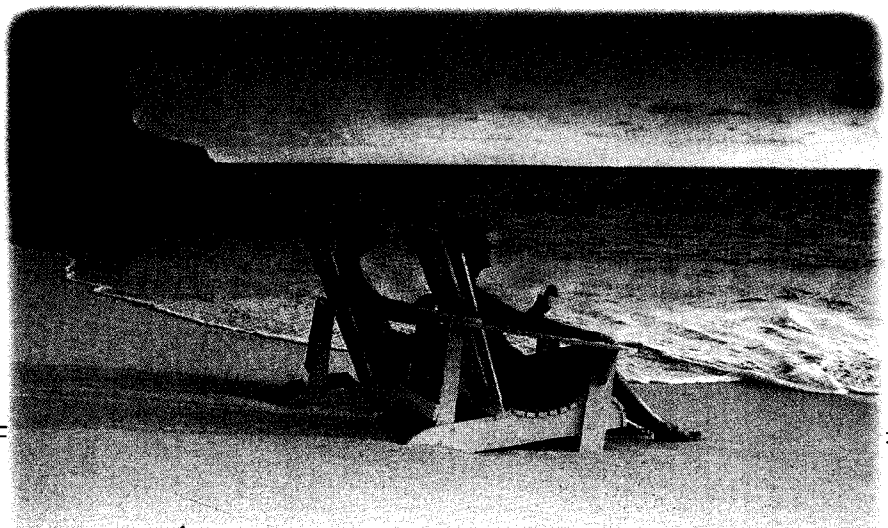

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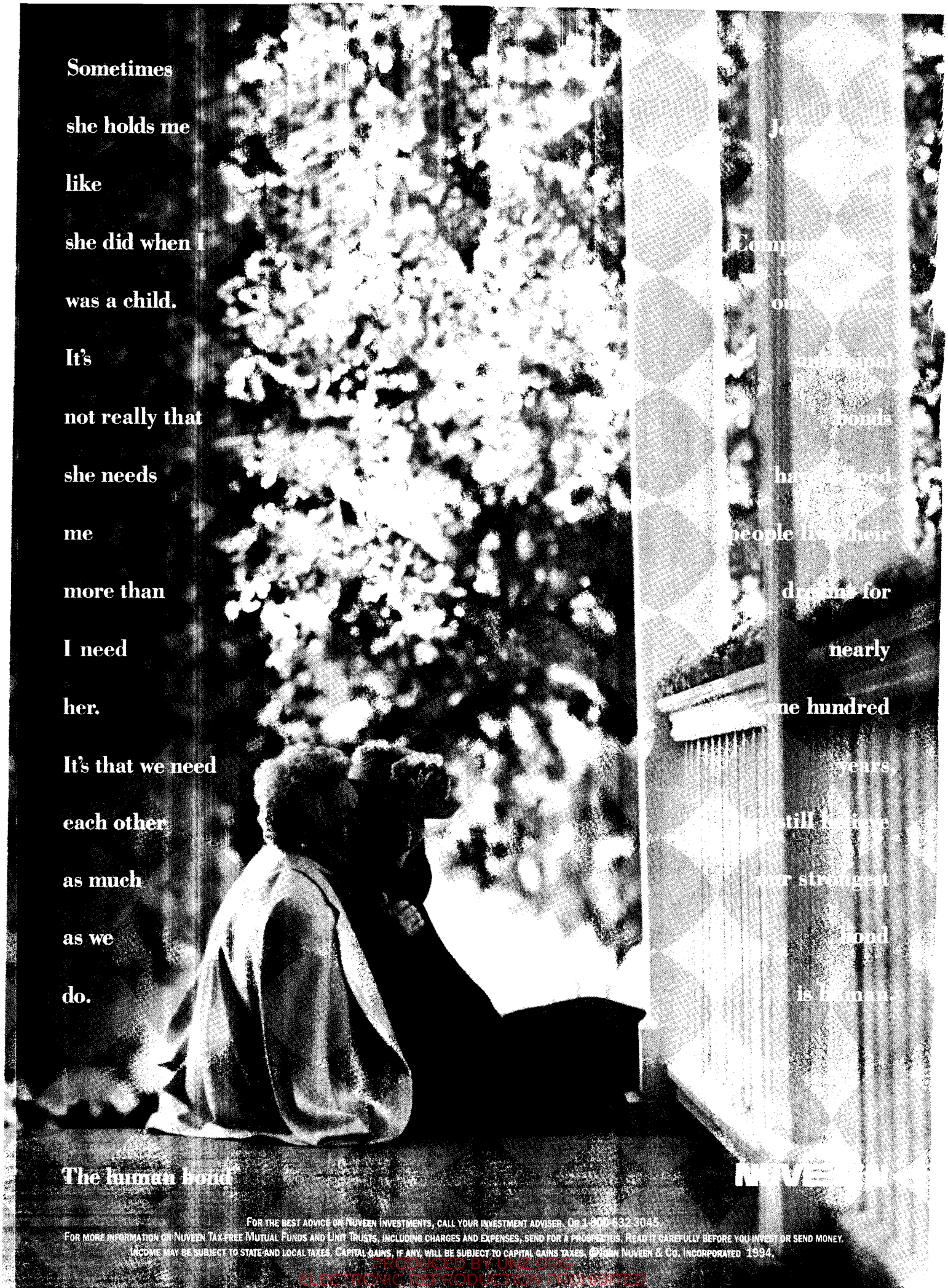

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MICHAEL BUSSELLE

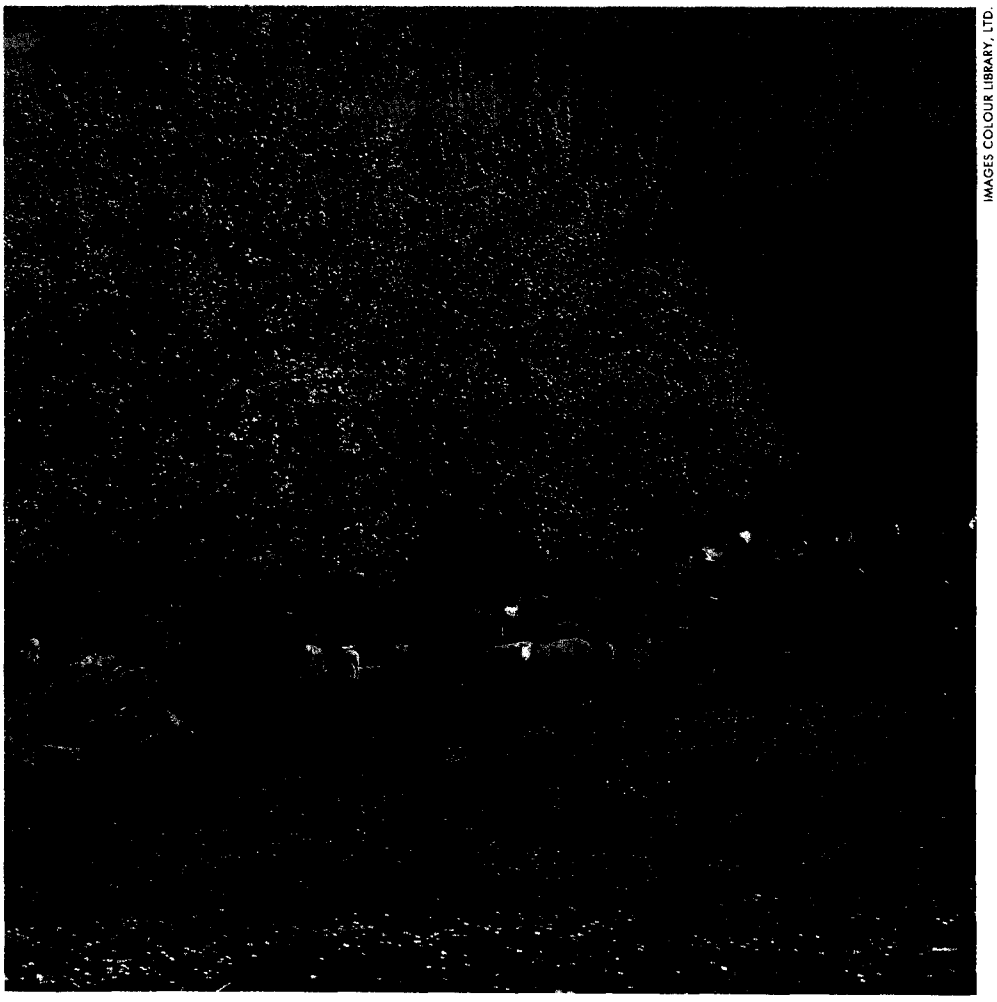
of the Résistance in the Second World War; the country of *The Lost Upland*, by W. S. Merwin.

From the terrace of our borrowed farmhouse we could look out across the broad alluvial bottomlands of the Dordogne Valley, with its walnut orchards, its sheep and cattle, its strawberries and melons, into the distance at Castelnaud—"the second most important military castle in France," as the travel literature has it. Built shortly before the Hundred Years' War, Castelnaud saw its military importance recede after the twelfth century; it fell into desuetude and was damaged by fire. In the past century a retired operatic tenor refurbished the castle, with remarkable taste and resourcefulness, in order to make a comfortable home for his "ward" and adoptive daughter. Now, long after his death, it serves each year as the site for the St. Céré summer music festival.

Our house, a mile from the photogenic hilltop village of Loubressac, where we did our basic food shopping, lay in a hamlet of perhaps twenty limestone houses, barns, sheds, and byres, inhabited by a few farmers with antique Massey-Ferguson tractors and, in the broken-down stone barns, donkey carts, ancient and unusable automobiles, harness, farm tools, old machinery, and stale hay, as well as livestock. The village also housed an expert on legal ethics from the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, a volatile but highly gifted painter from Antwerp, quite a number of chickens and domesticated pigeons, and perhaps a thousand bespectacled sheep (their black eye-rings and ears are indigenous)—in fact, many more sheep than people. After a fortnight, when we left the region to take a train from Brive-la-Gaillarde to Paris, the farmhouse, with its huge rooms beneath rough fifteenth-century beams, its stately grandfather clock, its forbidding family portraits of girls who looked as though they had died young, its massive bureaux and cupboards, stout tables, comfortable chairs, and positively voluptuous beds, its tiled kitchen, and the daylong sounds of birdsong near at hand and sheep bells clanging in the distance, had come to feel like our second home, and the farm and trades people of field and town our countrymen.

We were lucky in our season, relishing the long daylight hours of the summer solstice, when all the children in France are still in school and their parents have not yet been liberated to travel. In our hundred kilometers of walking, averaging seven or eight kilometers a day, we encountered only ten other walkers, eight of them British. In our visits to half a dozen restaurants, some rather distinguished, we never found more than two other tables occupied, but the menus were ready, the food fresh, the service alert, and the wines on hand to pour or to chill. Quercy is the region, after all, of the truffle, the walnut, and the plum, of pâté de foie gras, of *confit d'oie* (goose preserved in its own fat), of *magret de canard*, of the robust black wines of Cahors, the heady white wines of Bergerac, and the delicious *eau-de-vie de prune*, a liqueur made from local plums which bears no more resemblance to slivovitz, its Eastern European cousin, than Earl Grey tea does to Ovaltine.

Numerous market towns lie within the



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Top, the Autoire Valley; above, some inhabitants of the Dordogne Valley

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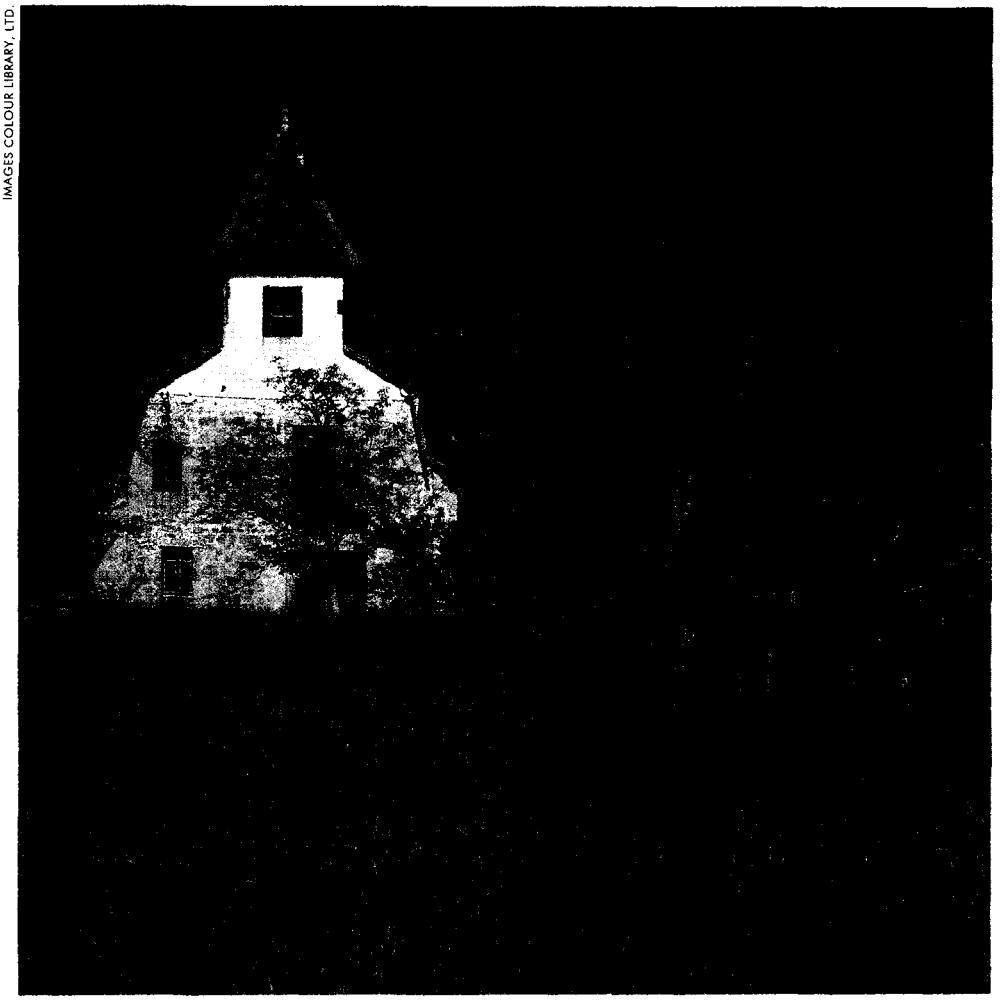

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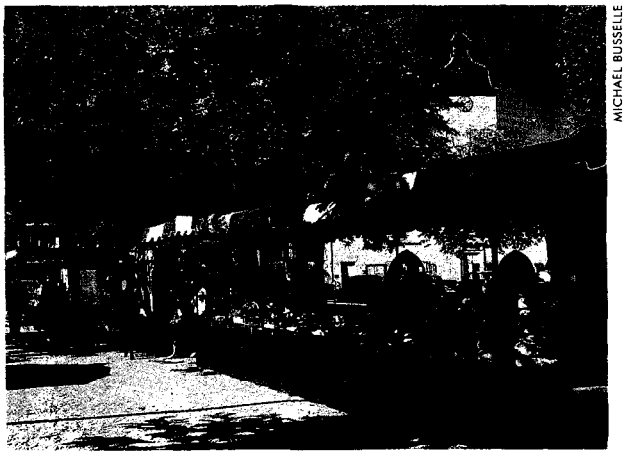
Above, an ancient farmhouse near Autoire; below, a village market day

territory we marked out for ourselves, and that territory is crisscrossed by an intricate pattern of roads, lanes, and trails, all three mostly bordered on both sides by walls of white limestone whose fragments have been fitted together with such picture-puzzle care as to make the walls of New England look positively blowsy; these are festooned with gleaming wigs of bright green moss, which have embellished them for hundreds of years. The many ways of getting people (or sheep) from one place to another tempt the traveler to walk, and that is what we did a great part of every fine day: set our feet to countryside around our hamlet. We also drove to farmers' markets in nearby towns, where we undertook more walks; cooked meals on our return with the marvelous local ingredients, according to recipes from the house's copious cookbook library; read other books that bore no trace of professional relevance; slept a great deal; ate at this restaurant or that —but all within our square of twenty-five kilometers. Less, as they say, is more.

Sounds arbitrary, doesn't it? But within that area of a single fold of the Michelin Tourist Map #75 we found open heath, deep limestone valleys, thick woods, cultivated walnut groves, luxurious châteaux, tumbledown farms, fields of cows and sheep and goats, wheat fields, hayfields, meadows, pastures, limestone cliffs, vast underground caves, deep underground rivers and dry streambeds, exquisite and ancient villages, agreeable river towns and ancient churches, castles both operative and long since dismantled, waterfalls, ruined mills, and one famous destination for pilgrims (Rocamadour, set into the side of a cliff, with its notable black virgin in the Chapelle de Notre-Dame, one of seven churches in a single town square).

We could have spent an entire lifetime in that one fold of map—as many others have done—with sufficient variety to entertain us: variety of landscape and variety of diet. Quercy offers a cuisine that, depending on your taste, can be as burly as cassoulet, as savory as a rack of lamb in its own juice, or as delicate as a *salade des gourmands* containing a slice of foie gras, another of *terrine de canard*, a few slices of country ham, and warm goose giblets (a local delicacy) on a bed of bright green lettuce lightly dressed with walnut oil and strewn with a few of the crunchy walnuts of the region. A characteristic cheese course offers one cheese from the goat, locally celebrated as *cabecou*, another from the sheep (Roquefort), and a third, usually the least impressive, from the cow.

But not everything served in Quercy is bad for the arteries: fish from the nearby Mediterranean is cooked with a dab hand. One particularly delicious dish we sampled in Sousceyrac, at a lovely hostelry called L'Hôtel des Déjeuners, was a *filet de Rascasse aux écrevisses avec fleur de courgette*, which consisted of a delicious white Mediterranean fish poached in a fist around its own forcemeat and garnished with a zucchini flower stuffed with tiny crayfish. In Quercy they like to flavor their desserts with walnuts, and if you can pass up the *assiette de fruits rouges* (strawberries and raspberries), you may have a *crème brûlée aux noix*, which is as delicious as things are allowed to get.



MICHAEL BUSSELLE

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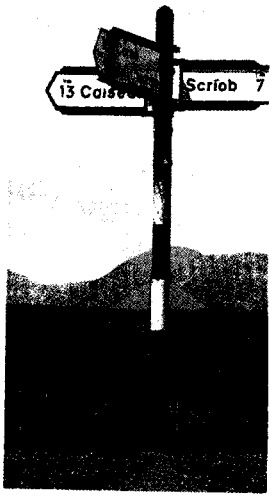

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But first whet your appetite with a good long walk—say, a walk from Loubressac to Brard and back again, eight kilometers round trip. You'll follow an easy trail lined with purple alyssum, marguerites, clovers, pink convolvulus, and scarlet poppies, and marked by a fluttering variety of yellow and blue butterflies, golden orioles, hawks, and blackbirds, along the verge of a limestone cliff that falls to an exquisite medieval village, Autoire, 800 feet below. A village like Autoire is best viewed from above if you want to make out its pattern, and with a pair of binoculars you can see the tables set in the gardens, and the bouquets in the vases as well as the flowers in their beds. We were standing on a height of millefleurs country tapestry, spying on a medieval urban plan.

THE day we walked from Loubressac to Brard we were accompanied by a slightly agitated kestrel whose nest we must have been threatening. It swooped past us now and then, just to keep an eye on us in case we were English—for we were passing a part of the cliff top where the map notes "Château des Anglais" and then adds, with satisfaction, "(*en ruine*)." Even now, after 500 years, everything is politics: the English dominated this part of France for centuries. Nonetheless, the natives formed the core of the Résistance, under the leadership of Malraux, against the Nazis during the Vichy regime and after. Only a few miles from our base, at the top of the cliff, was a modest monument celebrating the drop of 600 weapons-laden parachutes to support the Résistance on Bastille Day, 1944; and the walled walks from this point of vantage were among the loveliest and most peaceful we encountered.

On another day we walked from our house westward along the highlands overlooking the Bave River, to find the gloomy ruins of the Castle of Taillefer, which are only vaguely marked on the walkers' maps that can be bought in most local bookstores. On another we penetrated the valley of the Alzou River to seek the shade where the ancient Moulin du Saut still stands, only a few miles from Roumégouse, to which we continued in order to enjoy a particularly luxurious light lunch (green beans with truffles, a glass of Monbazillac, and excellent ice cream) on the terrace of Château de Roumégouse, a grand hotel. Only two other tables were occupied even here.

On yet another day we visited a market where we found pairs of old ladies who seemed to date back to the Third Republic, with their knitted caps and knitted shopping bags; wine merchants who offered *dégustations* of their wares, and sipped two glasses to their customers' one all day; and farm women who traveled from market to market with fresh onions, geese, cheeses, truffles, mushrooms, walnuts, and good humor. It was in these markets, or on the rough limestone paths that chewed away at the soles of our shoes, between the sheep pastures with their sound of lambs baaing and their fragrance of manure, or in the bars of the villages sipping a Ricard in the shank of the afternoon, that we knew ourselves to be somewhere we had never been before: in the depths of the country, the region the French call *la France profonde*.

The Keys to the Castle

How to find the ideal short-term rental in France

by

Barbara Wallraff

AS the world's most popular tourist destination—outdistancing the second-place United States by millions—France has so many hotels, inns, and bed-and-breakfasts that it seems a pity not to try some of them. And yet many visitors have another kind of experience in mind: renting a house in the country or an apartment in town, and living as the French do. It would be redundant to describe here the special charms of this sort of vacation, Peter Davison having detailed them so effectively above. My purpose, rather, is to explain how to find the rental of your dreams, so as to experience those charms for yourself.

If there are any prerequisites, they do not include fluency in French, as my husband and I have enjoyed proving. It does help, though, if you like planning trips as well as taking them. Regardless, the procedures for renting a house or an apartment are fairly straightforward once you have made a few basic decisions about your trip.

The first decision to be made is not to go to France during July or August. Rental-property supply and demand are cruelly out of balance then. Renters of property outside Paris tend to require minimum stays of at least two weeks and to charge the highest prices of the year—and even so, the most desirable properties get booked up six to ten months in advance. There's an ample supply of apartments to rent in Paris during July and August, of course—but who wants them, when all the Parisians, chefs and shopkeepers included, have fled? For rentals outside Paris during the rest of the year or in it nearly anytime, you shouldn't have to plan more than a month ahead, or commit to a minimum stay of more than a few days to a week.

The next decision to be made is where you want to visit and how flexible you're willing to be, geographically, in order to save money or secure just the right temporary home or both. (*Chevaux sauvages* couldn't drag me into a discussion of whether Normandy or Brittany, the Dordogne or Provence, the eighth arrondissement or the fourth, is best. Seemingly every hectare of France has its champions, and choosing a few map coordinates of your own is part of the planning that it helps if you enjoy.) If you consider yourself very flexible, within France or within Paris, your best bet will be to follow Peter Davison's example and try to find a place through whatever connections you happen to have: Do you know people who own a house in France, or who once rented a place they liked so much they couldn't stop talking about it? Do you receive a college alumni magazine or a professional journal that carries classified ads for rentals abroad? By minimizing both the role of middlemen and the impersonality of the transaction, you will almost certainly save money, and at the same time you will maximize your chances of having local people look out

Illustrations by Fritz Dumville

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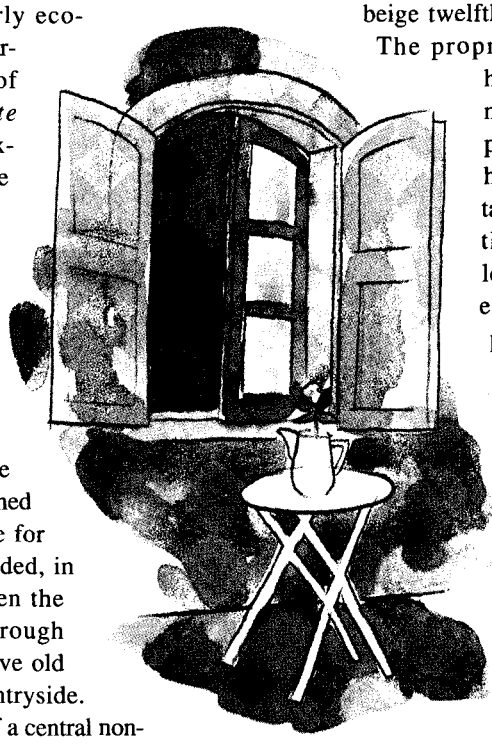
for you. Some local people will anyway—the French are notably hospitable when they're in the mood—but the more people taking an interest the better.

ANYONE has only so many connections, though, whereas the choices available to the public are virtually limitless. A particularly economical and peculiarly French range of choices is the *gîte* network, which exists throughout the nation, even unto the overseas *départements*, or provinces, of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion, and Guiana. There are, though, no *gîtes* in Paris. The network has remained true to the purpose for which it was founded, in 1955: to strengthen the rural economy through tourism and preserve old houses in the countryside. Today it consists of a central nonprofit organization, a rental and administrative bureau in each French *département*, and some 50,000 houses and apartments, owned and cared for by some 32,000 proprietors; each year 1,000 to 2,000 new *gîtes* are fixed up, with the help of grants from the departmental bureaus, and added to the network.



These houses and apartments rent for considerably less than those available through commercial agencies—though what's available commercially is usually more centrally located and more deluxe. For example purposes I compared what was for rent in and near Ménerbes, beloved of Peter Mayle and the fans of his *A Year in Provence* and other books. A *gîte* that is half of a two-family dwelling in Plan-d'Orgon, within ten miles of Ménerbes, accommodating four people, rents for about $180 a week in low season and $200 a week in high. The least expensive commercial rental I found, in contrast, was a converted windmill at Gordes, which houses three and rents for $400 to $450. More typical was a six-person house with pool in Ménerbes itself, available for $810 to $2,160 a week.

I need to say that my own experience with *gîtes* has been ambiguous. My husband and I rented a little chalet west of Paris for a weekend and found it charming, with a working fireplace, an inviting terrace, and a stuffed pheasant mounted on the dining-room wall. It was charmingly sited, too, overlooking a sleepy beige twelfth-century village. The proprietors couldn't have been nicer or more helpful, dropping by to bring us homemade apple tart and to warn us that we'd better leave a few hours earlier than we'd planned, because a train strike had suddenly been announced for the day of our departure. But on that rainy weekend out of season, the chalet smelled mildewy and peculiar, spiders lurked in the shower, there was nothing but tub-and-tile cleaner with which to wash the dishes, and the coffee maker was broken. Which way the scale tips in a case like that is a matter of personal choice.

Friends report having enjoyed their week's stay in a *gîte* but feeling outraged to have been charged about $90 for the use of sheets for two beds and towels for three persons (sheet and towel rental does incur an extra charge, assuming the proprietor provides this service at all; count on paying at least $10 a week per person). Other friends, a couple, recently spent a week in each of two *gîtes* and returned with nothing but praise for the accommodations and the lavish hospitality. "They're good to Americans over there," the wife told me with conviction.

The easiest way to put yourself in touch with the *gîte* network is to walk into a bookstore with a strong travel section and ask for a paperback whose official title is, apparently, *French Farm & Village Holiday Guide* (Hunter Publishing, $17.95), although the words "The Gîtes Guide" appear in larger type on the

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SEASON PREVIEW

Authors Touring America

STANLEY TURECKI, M.D. WITH SARAH WERNICK, PH.D.
The Emotional Problems of Normal Children

Lying, defiance, nighttime fears, sibling rivalry, and hyperactivity are problems often associated with troubled children—the subject of Stanley Turecki's child-rearing classic, *The Difficult Child.* But Turecki's second book, *The Emotional Problems of Normal Children*, co-authored with Sarah Wernick, reassures parents that these problems may occur in normal children, too. The book teaches parents to intervene effectively by using their intimate knowledge of the child. The book draws on Turecki's highly successful practice as a child and family psychiatrist, and offers case vignettes outlining the innovative methods he suggests. In March, Turecki will visit Denver, Seattle, Portland, Boston, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Houston, and Atlanta to discuss the book. For information call (800) 223-5780.

CAROL EDGARIAN
Rise the Euphrates

Hailed by Amy Tan as an "important story that is at once unique and universal," *Rise the Euphrates* is Carol Edgarian's debut novel. The story begins with Casard, a nine-year-old Armenian girl who watches her family die at the hands of the Turks on a death march to the Euphrates. Though she tries to put her unspeakable past behind her by emigrating to America, she infuses her daughter with a crippling legacy of anger, shame, and survivor's guilt. It takes Casard's granddaughter to heal the family and restore dignity to her family's past. In April, Edgarian will discuss her book in New York, Hartford, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. For information call (212) 572-2302.

JONATHAN RAUCH
Demosclerosis: The Silent Killer of American Government

Gridlock, journalist Jonathan Rauch argues, is not the problem with American government. The problem is that basic flaws in American democracy have crippled government institutions, resulting in a condition he calls "demosclerosis." In his latest book Rauch puts the blame for the condition on the feverish proliferation of special-interest groups that have calcified government with their burdensome demands. But Rauch does not stop at diagnosis: he prescribes his own therapy for relieving government's heavy load. In April, Rauch, who is also the author of *Kindly Inquisitors*, will discuss *Demosclerosis* in New York, Washington, Chicago, and Los Angeles. For information call (212) 572-2302.

RUSSELL JACOBY
Dogmatic Wisdom

Russell Jacoby thinks that America has missed the point. Embroiled in a battle of words over political correctness, multiculturalism, and the Western canon, conservatives, liberals, and radicals alike have ignored the real threats to education—an increasingly violent and decreasingly literate society, and a pervasive commercialism that undermines both liberal education and genuine multiculturalism. Jacoby outlines the essential elements of education, and chastises ideologues for ignoring them. In April, Jacoby will discuss his book in New York, Washington, Boston, Chicago, Denver, and San Francisco. For information call (212) 782-8278.

ABRAHAM VERGHESE
My Own Country: A Doctor's Story of a Town and Its People in the Age of AIDS

The first book on AIDS written by a doctor who works with its victims, *My Own Country* traces the impact of the virus as it ripples through a small town in the Bible Belt's heart. Abraham Verghese reveals the personal drama of lives suddenly thrown off the protected path—the shame of an HIV-positive homosexual returning home to die; the anger of a woman toward the husband who infected her; the fear of a religious man who hides his infection from his church and children. But Verghese also finds triumph in the havens of support that enable survivors to carry on. In May, Verghese will discuss his book when he travels to New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Portland, Pittsburgh, and Iowa City. Call (212) 698-7277 for information.

DIANE ACKERMAN
A Natural History of Love

In her much-anticipated companion volume to *A Natural History of the Senses*, the poet, journalist, and naturalist Diane Ackerman dabbles in the titillating topic of love through the ages. Ackerman peers at what she calls "the great intangible" through an interdisciplinary lens. Her anecdotal tour of love through history draws lessons from the philosophies of Stendhal, Tristan, Proust, and Freud; considers the science of love provided by neurophysiology; and explores modern-day relationships that inform amorous archetypes from sensitive guy to smooth operator. Ackerman, who is also the author of *The Moon by Whalelight,* will discuss her book in June when she travels to New York, Boston, Washington, Atlanta, Chicago, Cleveland, Dayton, Houston, Dallas, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. Call (212) 572-2302 for information.

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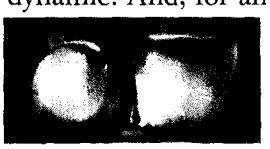

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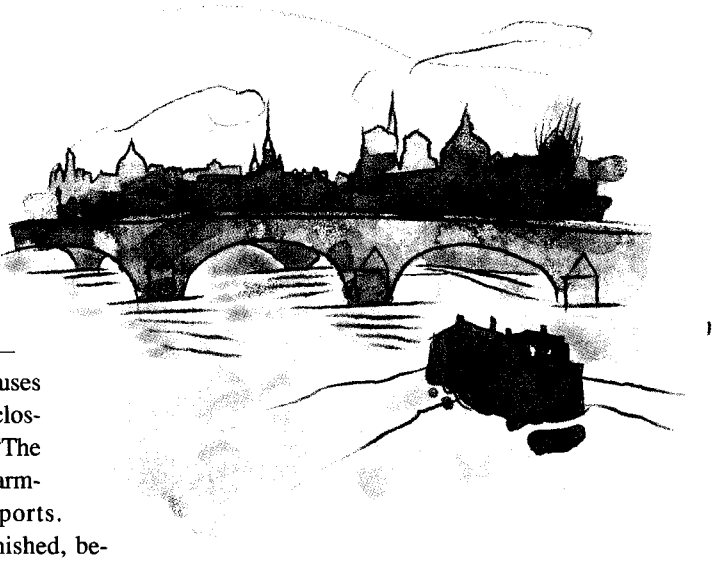
spine and cover. This book contains brief descriptions and tiny snapshots of more than 1,200 *gîtes* throughout France (and Corsica), selected for inclusion by the departmental bureaus at no charge to the owners. It guides an English-speaking reader through the process of renting a *gîte*, explaining niceties like the sheet and towel conventions, supplying addresses and phone numbers, and providing sample letters in French.

Alternatively, if you are reasonably comfortable with French and know where in France you want to spend your vacation, you may wish to dip into the series of *gîte* books that the French use. These books each list all the *gîtes* in a given *département*. There are, as well, specialty books of handicapped-accessible *gîtes*; "*super-gîtes*," or unusually deluxe houses; new listings, which one friend who has lived in France advises are preferable, because everything is likely to be in good order; and the bed-and-breakfasts, campgrounds, and children's camps that make up other branches of the Gîtes de France network. The prices of the books are typically in the vicinity of $8 or $10 (including postage), though a couple of them cost less than $2 and a couple cost more than $15. They can be ordered by mail from Gîtes de France at 35 rue Godot de Mauroy, 75009 Paris, or by fax at 011-33-1-49-70-75-76; include a Mastercard or Visa number with your order.

If for some reason you insist on taking your vacation in July or August, you may wish to try a different, if similar, method of finding a country house, recommended by a French acquaintance who has had success with it herself. She suggests that you write to the tourism offices of particular *départements* or towns —not the *gîte* bureaus— asking for their lists of houses available for rent and enclosing postal reply coupons. "The houses are less rural and farmlike than *gîtes*," she reports. "And they are better furnished, because the owners live there except in summer."



Alas, the private castles furnished with period antiques and the luxurious hilltop villas with views and pools—not to mention the widest selection of vacation houses—don't tend to show up on even the tourism offices' rosters. Thus the well-to-do and the particular may prefer to rent through a commercial agency. *Birnbaum's France* contains a good list of these agencies (and is an unusually helpful guidebook in other respects as well); a listing of agencies that rent houses and *gîtes* is also available from the French Government Tourist Office (900-990-0040), at no charge beyond the price of the call.

I requested information from all the agencies I could learn of, and received responses from perhaps a dozen. Then I spread out the folders and booklets and brochures and Xeroxes on my floor, compared what was comparable, and noted what was not. I discovered three key points from this exercise. First, not every agency covers every region of France equally well, or even at all, but for virtually any region of France some cover it in fair depth. Second, there's no need to pay a registration fee up front. The listings available from agencies that do not demand one are at least as extensive as the listings from ones that do, and cost no more—so you have nothing to gain by tying yourself down to one agency. Third, you can pay wildly varying amounts for the same property, depending on whom you rent it from. When I was in Paris this past fall, I picked up a booklet from a rental agency called Colle (phone 011-33-1-45-62-37-19, fax 011-33-1-45-61-03-13). Although a French acquaintance had described Colle to me as a high-end kind of place, it was offering a particular large castle, whose owners seem to have shopped it out rather promiscuously, for some $4,000 less per week than the $12,000 one U.S. agency asks for it. Granted, the U.S. agency's price includes the services of a housekeeper for six days of the week—but for $4,000 you could bring two or three housekeepers with you, paying their airfare and their usual wage, and still have something left over for truffles and champagne. This is another reason to be in touch with more than one agency.

MANY of the same agencies that rent houses also rent apartments in Paris; and, again, *gîtes* don't exist in the city, so the agencies are your only option other than such connections as you have. The range of rental prices in Paris is much the same as the range of prices for rooms in all except budget hotels. You will, though, almost invariably get more space for your money in an apartment than in a comparably priced hotel room. The minimum stay can sometimes be as short as one night—though if you're in transit and won't have time even to go to

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the market, it's hard to see what the advantage of an apartment would be.

I used the Barclay International Group (800-845-6636, or 212-832-3777 from within New York state), which boasts that it can offer lower rates on several of the properties it represents than would be quoted by the property owners themselves. My husband and I spent four nights in a top-of-the-line apartment at Les Suites Saint-Honoré, down the block from the American embassy, around the corner from the French White House, and half a mile from the Hôtel Le Bristol, which we toured for comparison's sake. If money were absolutely no object, frankly I'd take a suite at the Bristol—but still I'd miss our apartment's well-appointed kitchen to stock with breakfasts and cocktail-hour snacks. (The idea of being a tourist and yet being able to invite friends over for dinner filled me with inexplicable glee.) If money weren't much of an object and we were traveling with children, though, I'd take a two-bedroom apartment at Les Suites Saint-Honoré.

We spent the next three nights in a much more modest place, part of the JRH Prestige group, in the Trocadero neighborhood, just across the river from the Eiffel Tower. "The Trocadero is just like the Upper East Side—and just as boring," a perhaps jaded New Yorker had warned me. To me, it simply felt more like real life than the diplomatic district—and had better supermarkets. In this second apartment I was fascinated by a three-ring notebook that the proprietor had assembled, containing not only lists of museums and her favorite restaurants but also the operating instructions, tucked into plastic sleeves, for all the apartment's appliances (how handy to have all this information in one place!) and an inventory, with prices, of the apartment's contents, right down to the eggcups, the lamps from Ikea, and the headboard on the bed. Would it occur to a national of any other country in the world to compile such a book?

The French have a passion and a genius for domesticity, and the opportunity to meld your own style of domestic life with French ingredients and accoutrements is bound to produce memorable results. As it happens, my own house now has a notebook full of appliances' operating instructions in plastic sleeves. I worry that a stuffed pheasant for the dining-room wall will be next. ❦

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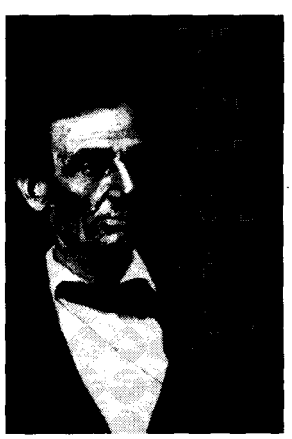

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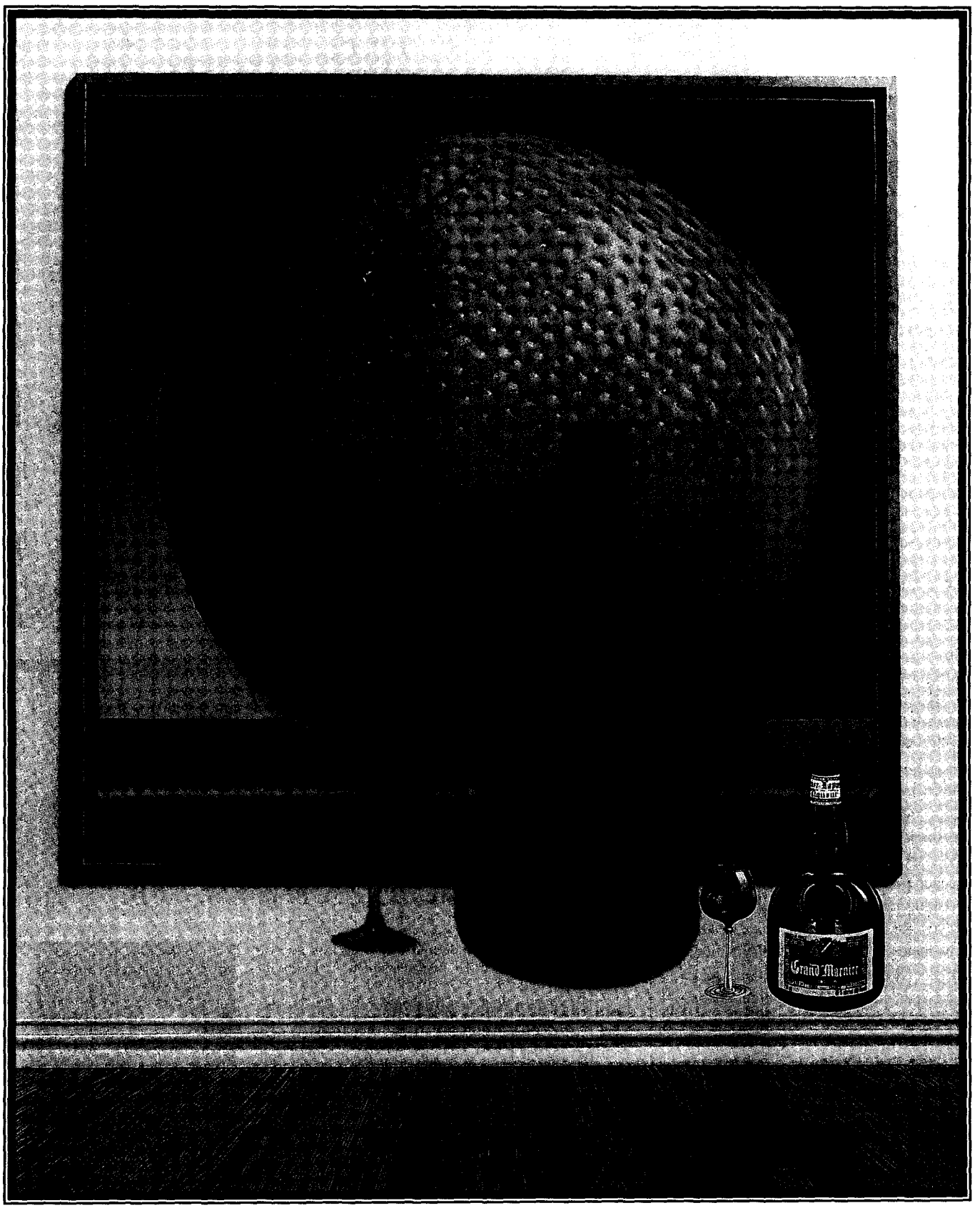

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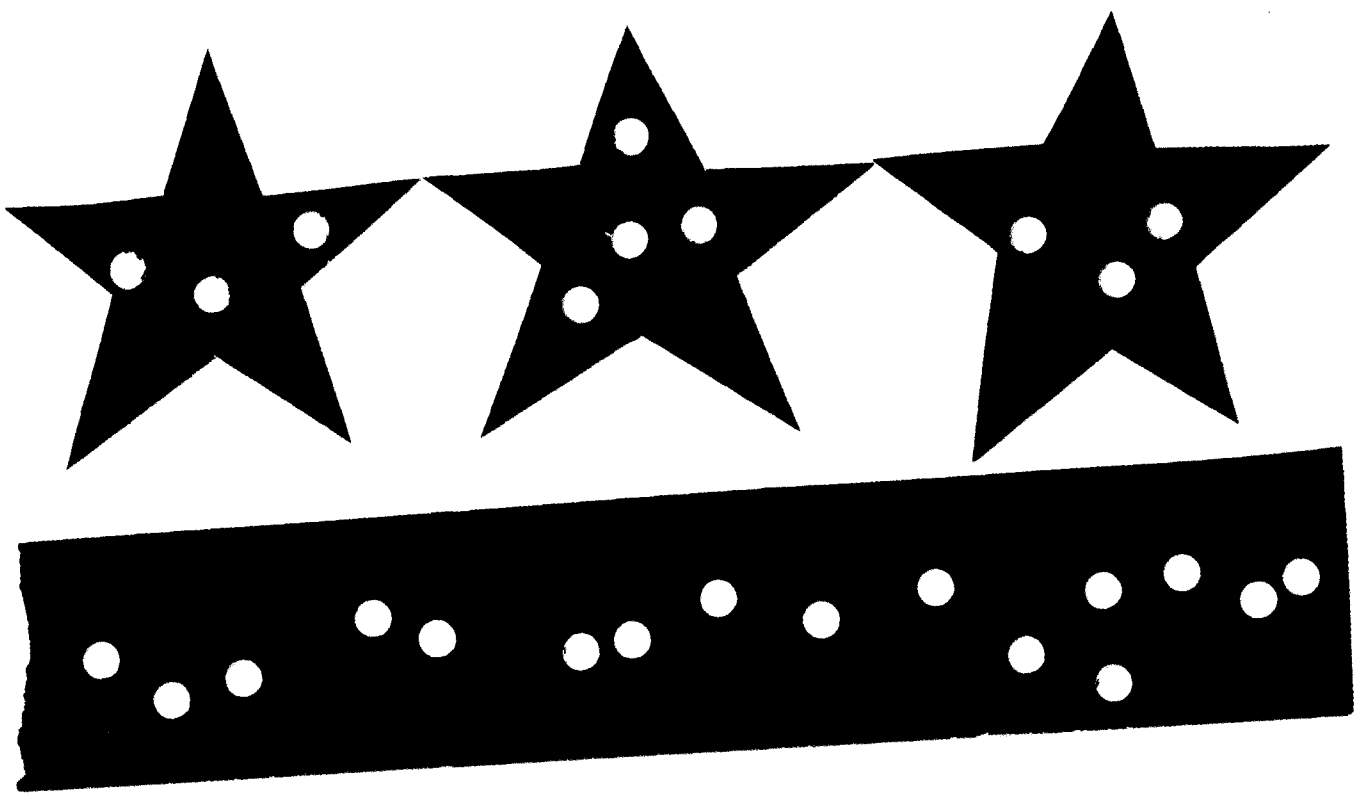
THE FALSE PROMISE OF GUN CONTROL

by DANIEL D. POLSBY



Gun-control laws may save some lives, but they can never stem the flow of guns, and they divert attention from the roots of our crime problem

DURING the 1960s and 1970s the robbery rate in the United States increased sixfold, and the murder rate doubled; the rate of handgun ownership nearly doubled in that period as well. Handguns and criminal violence grew together apace, and national opinion leaders did not fail to remark on the coincidence.

It has become a bipartisan article of faith that more handguns cause more violence. Such was the unequivocal conclusion of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence in 1969, and such is now the editorial opinion of virtually every influential newspaper and magazine, from *The Washington Post* to *The Economist* to the *Chicago Tribune*. Members of the House and Senate who have not dared to confront the gun lobby concede the connection privately. Even if the National Rifle Association can produce blizzards of angry calls and letters to the Capitol virtually overnight, House members one by one have been going public, often after some new firearms atrocity at a fast-food restaurant or the like. And last November they passed the Brady bill.

Alas, however well accepted, the conventional wisdom about guns and violence is mistaken. Guns don't increase national rates of crime and violence—but the continued proliferation of gun-control laws almost certainly does. Current rates of crime and violence are a bit below the peaks of the late 1970s, but because of a slight oncoming bulge in the at-

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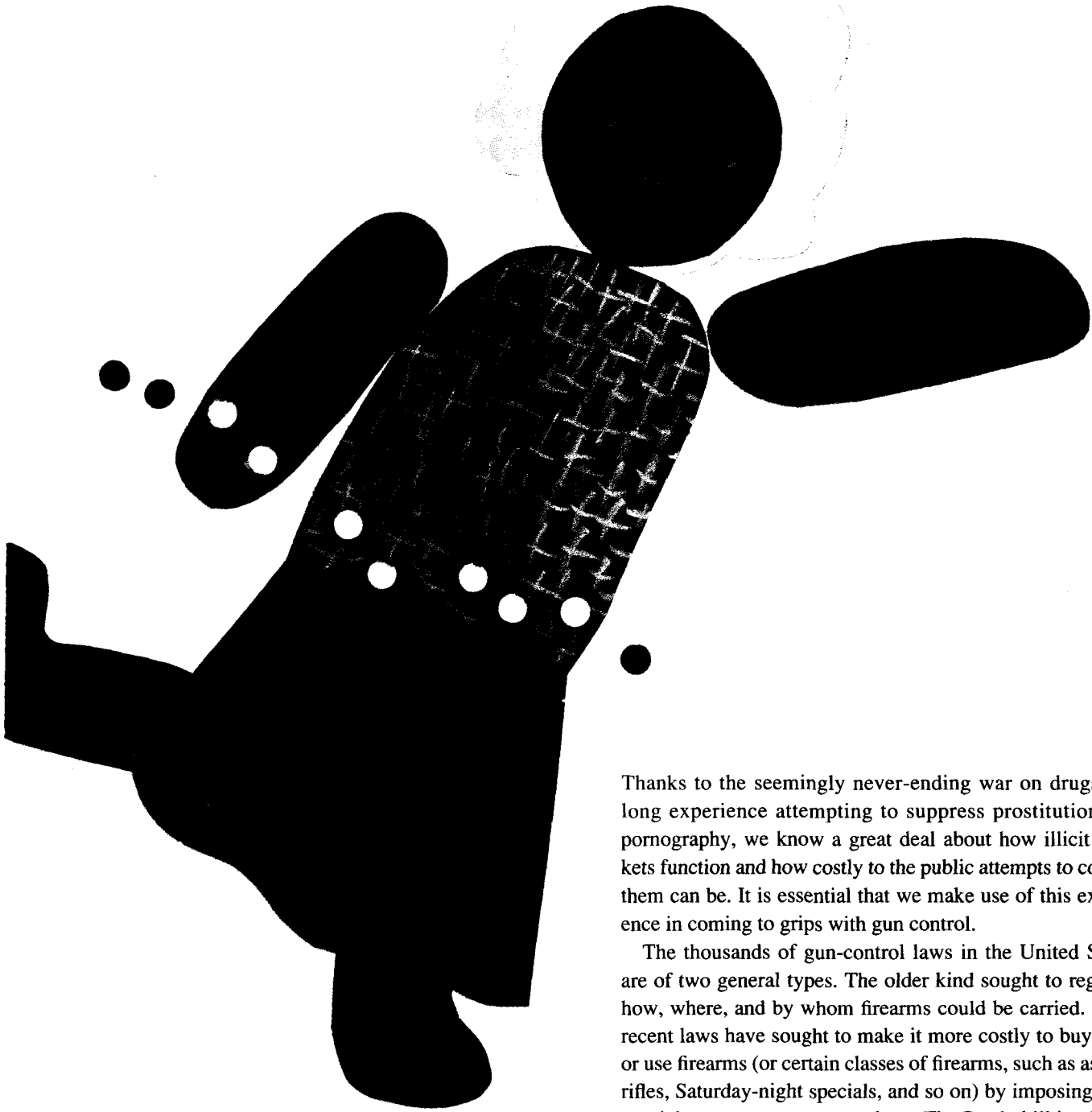

risk population of males aged fifteen to thirty-four, the crime rate will soon worsen. The rising generation of criminals will have no more difficulty than their elders did in obtaining the tools of their trade. Growing violence will lead to calls for laws still more severe. Each fresh round of legislation will be followed by renewed frustration.

Gun-control laws don't work. What is worse, they act perversely. While legitimate users of firearms encounter intense regulation, scrutiny, and bureaucratic control, illicit markets easily adapt to whatever difficulties a free society throws in their way. Also, efforts to curtail the supply of firearms inflict collateral damage on freedom and privacy interests that have long been considered central to American public life. Thanks to the seemingly never-ending war on drugs and long experience attempting to suppress prostitution and pornography, we know a great deal about how illicit markets function and how costly to the public attempts to control them can be. It is essential that we make use of this experience in coming to grips with gun control.

The thousands of gun-control laws in the United States are of two general types. The older kind sought to regulate how, where, and by whom firearms could be carried. More recent laws have sought to make it more costly to buy, sell, or use firearms (or certain classes of firearms, such as assault rifles, Saturday-night specials, and so on) by imposing fees, special taxes, or surtaxes on them. The Brady bill is of both types: it has a background-check provision, and its five-day waiting period amounts to a "time tax" on acquiring handguns. All such laws can be called scarcity-inducing, because they seek to raise the cost of buying firearms, as figured in terms of money, time, nuisance, or stigmatization.

Despite the mounting number of scarcity-inducing laws, no one is very satisfied with them. Hobbyists want to get rid of them, and gun-control proponents don't think they go nearly far enough. Everyone seems to agree that gun-control laws have some effect on the distribution of firearms. But it has not been the dramatic and measurable effect their proponents desired.

Opponents of gun control have traditionally wrapped their

WE KNOW A GREAT DEAL ABOUT HOW ILLICIT MARKETS FUNCTION. WE MUST

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arguments in the Second Amendment to the Constitution. Indeed, most modern scholarship affirms that so far as the drafters of the Bill of Rights were concerned, the right to bear arms was to be enjoyed by everyone, not just a militia, and that one of the principal justifications for an armed populace was to secure the tranquillity and good order of the community. But most people are not dedicated antiquitarians, and would not be impressed by the argument "I admit that my behavior is very dangerous to public safety, but the Second Amendment says I have a right to do it anyway." That would be a case for repealing the Second Amendment, not respecting it.

FIGHTING THE DEMAND CURVE

EVERYONE knows that possessing a handgun makes it easier to intimidate, wound, or kill someone. But the implication of this point for social policy has not been so well understood. It is easy to count the bodies of those who have been killed or wounded with guns, but not easy to count the people who have avoided harm because they had access to weapons. Think about uniformed police officers, who carry handguns in plain view not in order to kill people but simply to daunt potential attackers. And it works. Criminals generally do not single out police officers for opportunistic attack. Though officers can expect to draw their guns from time to time, few even in big-city departments will actually fire a shot (except in target practice) in the course of a year. This observation points to an important truth: people who are armed make comparatively unattractive victims. A criminal might not know if any one civilian is armed, but if it becomes known that a large number of civilians do carry weapons, criminals will become warier.

Which weapons laws are the right kinds can be decided only after considering two related questions. First, what is the connection between civilian possession of firearms and social violence? Second, how can we expect gun-control laws to alter people's behavior? Most recent scholarship raises serious questions about the "weapons increase violence" hypothesis. The second question is emphasized here, because it is routinely overlooked and often mocked when noticed; yet it is crucial. Rational gun control requires understanding not only the relationship between weapons and violence but also the relationship between laws and people's behavior. Some things are very hard to accomplish with laws. The purpose of a law and its likely effects are not always the same thing. Many statutes are notorious for the way in which their unintended effects have swamped their intended ones.

In order to predict who will comply with gun-control laws, we should remember that guns are economic goods that are traded in markets. Consumers' interest in them varies. For religious, moral, aesthetic, or practical reasons, some people would refuse to buy firearms at any price. Other people willingly pay very high prices for them.

Handguns, so often the subject of gun-control laws, are desirable for one purpose—to allow a person tactically to dominate a hostile transaction with another person. The value of a weapon to a given person is a function of two factors: how much he or she wants to dominate a confrontation if one occurs, and how likely it is that he or she will actually be in a situation calling for a gun.

Dominating a transaction simply means getting what one wants without being hurt. Where people differ is in how likely it is that they will be involved in a situation in which a gun will be valuable. Someone who *intends* to engage in a transaction involving a gun—a criminal, for example—is obviously in the best possible position to predict that likelihood. Criminals should therefore be willing to pay more for a weapon than most other people would. Professors, politicians, and newspaper editors are, as a group, at very low risk of being involved in such transactions, and they thus systematically underrate the value of defensive handguns. (Correlative, perhaps, is their uncritical readiness to accept studies that debunk the utility of firearms for self-defense.) The class of people we wish to deprive of guns, then, is the very class with the most inelastic demand for them—criminals—whereas the people most likely to comply with gun-control laws don't value guns in the first place.

DO GUNS DRIVE UP CRIME RATES?

WHICH premise is true—that guns increase crime or that the fear of crime causes people to obtain guns? Most of the country's major newspapers apparently take this problem to have been solved by an article published by Arthur Kellermann and several associates in the October 7, 1993, *New England Journal of Medicine*. Kellermann is an emergency-room physician who has published a number of influential papers that he believes discredit the thesis that private ownership of firearms is a useful means of self-protection. (An indication of his wide influence is that within two months the study received almost 100 mentions in publications and broadcast transcripts indexed in the Nexis data base.) For this study Kellermann and his associates identified fifteen behavioral and fifteen environmental variables that applied to a 388-member set of homicide victims, found a "matching" control group of 388 non–homicide victims, and then ascertained how the two groups differed in gun ownership. In interviews Kellermann made clear his be-

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lief that owning a handgun markedly increases a person's risk of being murdered.

But the study does not prove that point at all. Indeed, as Kellermann explicitly conceded in the text of the article, the causal arrow may very well point in the other direction: the threat of being killed may make people more likely to arm themselves. Many people at risk of being killed, especially people involved in the drug trade or other illegal ventures, might well rationally buy a gun as a precaution, and be willing to pay a price driven up by gun-control laws. Crime, after all, is a dangerous business. Peter Reuter and Mark Kleiman, drug-policy researchers, calculated in 1987 that the average crack dealer's risk of being killed was far greater than his risk of being sent to prison. (Their data cannot, however, support the implication that ownership of a firearm causes or exacerbates the risk of being killed.)

Defending the validity of his work, Kellermann has emphasized that the link between lung cancer and smoking was initially established by studies methodologically no different from his. Gary Kleck, a criminology professor at Florida State University, has pointed out the flaw in this comparison. No one ever thought that lung cancer causes smoking, so when the association between the two was established the direction of the causal arrow was not in doubt. Kleck wrote that it is as though Kellermann, trying to discover how diabetics differ from other people, found that they are much more likely to possess insulin than nondiabetics, and concluded that insulin is a risk factor for diabetes.

The New York Times, the *Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe,* and the *Chicago Tribune* all gave prominent coverage to Kellermann's study as soon as it appeared, but none saw fit to discuss the study's limitations. A few, in order to introduce a hint of balance, mentioned that the NRA, or some member of its staff, disagreed with the study. But readers had no way of knowing that Kellermann himself had registered a disclaimer in his text. "It is possible," he conceded, "that reverse causation accounted for some of the association we observed between gun ownership and homicide." Indeed, the point is stronger than that: "reverse causation" may account for *most* of the association between gun ownership and homicide. Kellermann's data simply do not allow one to draw any conclusion.

If firearms increased violence and crime, then rates of spousal homicide would have skyrocketed, because the stock of privately owned handguns has increased rapidly since the mid-1960s. But according to an authoritative study of spousal homicide in the *American Journal of Public Health*, by James Mercy and Linda Saltzman, rates of spousal homicide in the years 1976 to 1985 fell. If firearms increased violence and crime, the crime rate should have increased throughout the 1980s, while the national stock of privately owned handguns increased by more than a million units in every year of the decade. It did not. Nor should the rates of violence and crime in Switzerland, New Zealand, and Israel be as low as they are, since the number of firearms per civilian household is comparable to that in the United States. Conversely, gun-controlled Mexico and South Africa should be islands of peace instead of having murder rates more than twice as high as those here. The determinants of crime and law-abidingness are, of course, complex matters, which are not fully understood and certainly not explicable in terms of a country's laws. But gun-control enthusiasts, who have made capital out of the low murder rate in England, which is largely disarmed, simply ignore the counterexamples that don't fit their theory.

If firearms increased violence and crime, Florida's murder rate should not have been falling since the introduction, seven years ago, of a law that makes it easier for ordinary citizens to get permits to carry concealed handguns. Yet the murder rate has remained the same or fallen every year since the law was enacted, and it is now lower than the national murder rate (which has been rising). As of last November 183,561 permits had been issued, and only seventeen of the permits had been revoked because the holder was involved in a firearms offense. It would be precipitate to claim that the new law has "caused" the murder rate to subside. Yet here is a situation that doesn't fit the hypothesis that weapons increase violence.

If firearms increased violence and crime, programs of induced scarcity would suppress violence and crime. But—another anomaly—they don't. Why not? A theorem, which we could call the futility theorem, explains why gun-control laws must either be ineffectual or in the long term actually provoke more violence and crime. Any theorem depends on both observable fact and assumption. An assumption that can be made with confidence is that the higher the number of victims a criminal assumes to be armed, the higher will be the risk—the price—of assaulting them. By definition, gun-control laws should make weapons scarcer and thus more expensive. By our prior reasoning about demand among various types of consumers, after the laws are enacted criminals should be better armed, compared with noncriminals, than they were before. Of course, plenty of noncriminals will remain armed. But even if many noncriminals will pay as high a price as criminals will to obtain firearms, a larger number will not.

Criminals will thus still take the same gamble they already take in assaulting a victim who might or might not be armed. But they may appreciate that the laws have given them a freer field, and that crime still pays—pays even better, in fact, than before. What will happen to the rate of violence? Only a relatively few gun-mediated transactions—currently, five percent of armed robberies committed with firearms—result in someone's actually being shot (the statistics are not broken down into encounters between armed assailants and unarmed victims, and encounters in which both parties are armed). It seems reasonable to fear that if the number of such transactions were to increase because

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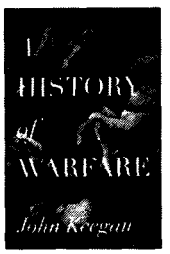

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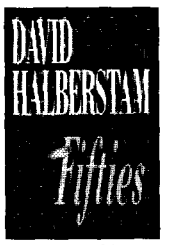

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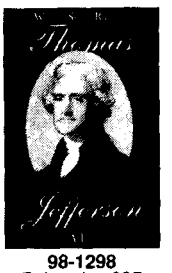

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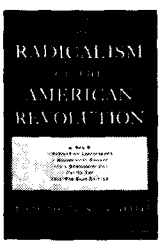

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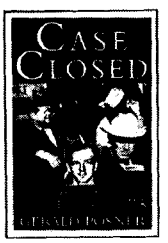

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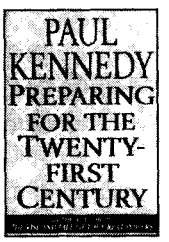

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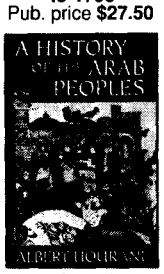

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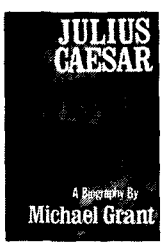

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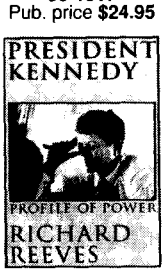

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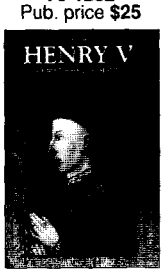

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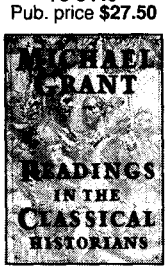

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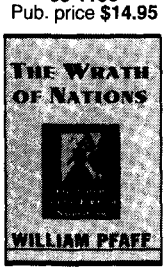

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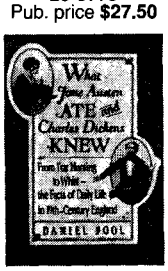

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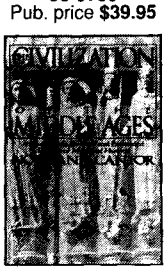

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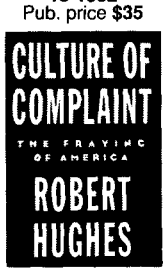

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criminals thought they faced fewer deterrents, there would be a corresponding increase in shootings. Conversely, if gun-mediated transactions declined—if criminals initiated fewer of them because they feared encountering an armed victim or an armed good Samaritan—the number of shootings would go down. The magnitude of these effects is, admittedly, uncertain. Yet it is hard to doubt the general tendency of a change in the law that imposes legal burdens on buying guns. The futility theorem suggests that gun-control laws, if effective at all, would unfavorably affect the rate of violent crime.

The futility theorem provides a lens through which to see much of the debate. It is undeniable that gun-control laws work—to an extent. Consider, for example, California's background-check law, which in the past two years has prevented about 12,000 people with a criminal record or a history of mental illness or drug abuse from buying handguns. In the same period Illinois's background-check law prevented the delivery of firearms to more than 2,000 people. Surely some of these people simply turned to an illegal market, but just as surely not all of them did. The laws of large numbers allow us to say that among the foiled thousands, some potential killers were prevented from getting a gun. We do not know whether the number is large or small, but it is implausible to think it is zero. And, as gun-control proponents are inclined to say, "If only one life is saved . . ."

The hypothesis that firearms increase violence does predict that if we can slow down the diffusion of guns, there will be less violence; one life, or more, *will* be saved. But the futility theorem asks that we look not simply at the gross number of bad actors prevented from getting guns but at the effect the law has on *all* the people who want to buy a gun. Suppose we succeed in piling tax burdens on the acquisition of firearms. We can safely assume that a number of people who might use guns to kill will be sufficiently discouraged not to buy them. But we cannot assume this about people who feel that they must have guns in order to survive financially and physically. A few lives might indeed be saved. But the overall rate of violent crime might not go down at all. And if guns are owned predominantly by people who have good reason to think they will use them, the rate might even go up.

Are there empirical studies that can serve to help us choose between the futility theorem and the hypothesis that guns increase violence? Unfortunately, no: the best studies of the effects of gun-control laws are quite inconclusive. Our statistical tools are too weak to allow us to identify an effect clearly enough to persuade an open-minded skeptic. But it is precisely when we are dealing with undetectable statistical effects that we have to be certain we are using the best models available of human behavior.

SEALING THE BORDER

HANDGUNS are not legally for sale in the city of Chicago, and have not been since April of 1982. Rifles, shotguns, and ammunition are available, but only to people who possess an Illinois Firearm Owner's Identification card. It takes up to a month to get this card, which involves a background check. Even if one has a FOID card there is a waiting period for the delivery of a gun. In few places in America is it as difficult to get a firearm legally as in the city of Chicago.

Yet there are hundreds of thousands of unregistered guns

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in the city, and new ones arriving all the time. It is not difficult to get handguns—even legally. Chicago residents with FOID cards merely go to gun shops in the suburbs. Trying to establish a city as an island of prohibition in a sea of legal firearms seems an impossible project.

Is a state large enough to be an effective island, then? Suppose Illinois adopted Chicago's handgun ban. Same problem again. Some people could just get guns elsewhere: Indiana actually borders the city, and Wisconsin is only forty miles away. Though federal law prohibits the sale of handguns in one state to residents of another, thousands of Chicagoans with summer homes in other states could buy handguns there. And, of course, a black market would serve the needs of other customers.

When would the island be large enough to sustain a weapons-free environment? In the United States people and cargoes move across state lines without supervision or hindrance. Local shortages of goods are always transient, no matter whether the shortage is induced by natural disasters, prohibitory laws, or something else.

Even if many states outlawed sales of handguns, then, they would continue to be available, albeit at a somewhat higher price, reflecting the increased legal risk of selling them. Mindful of the way markets work to undermine their efforts, gun-control proponents press for federal regulation of firearms, because they believe that only Congress wields the authority to frustrate the interstate movement of firearms.

Why, though, would one think that federal policing of illegal firearms would be better than local policing? The logic of that argument is far from clear. Cities, after all, are comparatively small places. Washington, D.C., for example, has an area of less than 45,000 acres. Yet local officers have had little luck repressing the illegal firearms trade there. Why should federal officers do any better watching the United States' 12,000 miles of coastline and millions of square miles of interior? Criminals should be able to frustrate federal police forces just as well as they can local ones. Ten years of increasingly stringent federal efforts to abate cocaine trafficking, for example, have not succeeded in raising the street price of the drug.

Consider the most drastic proposal currently in play, that of Senator John Chafee, of Rhode Island, who would ban the manufacture, sale, and home possession of handguns within the United States. This proposal goes far beyond even the Chicago law, because existing weapons would have to be surrendered. Handguns would become contraband, and selling counterfeit, stolen, and contraband goods is big business in the United States. The objective of law enforcement is to raise the costs of engaging in crime and so force criminals to take expensive precautions against becoming entangled with the legal system. Crimes of a given type will, in theory, decline as soon as the direct and indirect costs of engaging in them rise to the point at which criminals seek more profitable opportunities in other (not necessarily legal) lines of work.

In firearms regulation, translating theory into practice will continue to be difficult, at least if the objective is to lessen the practical availability of firearms to people who might abuse them. On the demand side, for defending oneself against predation there is no substitute for a firearm. Criminals, at least, can switch to varieties of law-breaking in which a gun confers little or no advantage (burglary, smash-and-grab), but people who are afraid of confrontations with

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criminals, whether rationally or (as an accountant might reckon it) irrationally, will be very highly motivated to acquire firearms. Long after the marijuana and cocaine wars of this century have been forgotten, people's demand for personal security and for the tools they believe provide it will remain strong.

On the supply side, firearms transactions can be consummated behind closed doors. Firearms buyers, unlike those who use drugs, pornography, or prostitution, need not recurrently expose themselves to legal jeopardy. One trip to the marketplace is enough to arm oneself for life. This could justify a consumer's taking even greater precautions to avoid apprehension, which would translate into even steeper enforcement costs for the police.

Don Kates Jr., a San Francisco lawyer and a much-published student of this problem, has pointed out that during the wars in Southeast and Southwest Asia local artisans were able to produce, from scratch, serviceable pot-metal counterfeits of AK-47 infantry rifles and similar weapons in makeshift backyard foundries. Although inferior weapons cannot discharge thousands of rounds without misfiring, they are more than deadly enough for light to medium service, especially by criminals and people defending themselves and their property, who ordinarily use firearms by threatening with them, not by firing them. And the skills necessary to make them are certainly as widespread in America as in the villages of Pakistan or Vietnam. Effective policing of such a cottage industry is unthinkable. Indeed, as Charles Chandler has pointed out, crude but effective firearms have been manufactured in prisons—highly supervised environments, compared with the outside world.

Seeing that local firearms restrictions are easily defeated, gun-control proponents have latched onto national controls as a way of finally making gun control something more than a gesture. But the same forces that have defeated local regulation will defeat further national regulation. Imposing higher costs on weapons ownership will, of course, slow down the weapons trade to some extent. But planning to slow it down in such a way as to drive down crime and violence, or to prevent motivated purchasers from finding ample supplies of guns and ammunition, is an escape from reality. And like many another such, it entails a morning after.

ADMINISTERING PROHIBITION

ASSUME for the sake of argument that to a reasonable degree of criminological certainty, guns are every bit the public-health hazard they are said to be. It follows, and many journalists and a few public officials have already said, that we ought to treat guns the same way we do smallpox viruses or other critical vectors of morbidity and mortality—namely, isolate them from potential hosts and destroy them as speedily as possible. Clearly, firearms have at least one characteristic that distinguishes them from smallpox viruses: nobody wants to keep smallpox viruses in the nightstand drawer. Amazingly enough, gun-control literature seems never to have explored the problem of getting weapons away from people who very much want to keep them in the nightstand drawer.

Our existing gun-control laws are not uniformly permissive, and, indeed, in certain places are tough even by international standards. Advocacy groups seldom stress the considerable differences among American jurisdictions, and media reports regularly assert that firearms are readily available to anybody anywhere in the country. This is not the case. For example, handgun restrictions in Chicago and the District of Columbia are much less flexible than the ones in the United Kingdom. Several hundred thousand British subjects may legally buy and possess sidearms, and anyone who joins a target-shooting club is eligible to do so. But in Chicago and the District of Columbia, excepting peace officers and the like, only grandfathered registrants may legally possess handguns. Of course, tens or hundreds of thousands of people in both those cities—nobody can be sure how many—do in fact possess them illegally.

Although there is, undoubtedly, illegal handgun ownership in the United Kingdom, especially in Northern Ireland (where considerations of personal security and public safety are decidedly unlike those elsewhere in the British Isles), it is probable that Americans and Britons differ in their disposition to obey gun-control laws: there is reputed to be a marked national disparity in compliance behavior. This difference, if it exists, may have something to do with the comparatively marginal value of firearms to British consumers. Even before it had strict firearms regulation, Britain had very low rates of crimes involving guns; British criminals, unlike their American counterparts, prefer burglary (a crime of stealth) to robbery (a crime of intimidation).

Unless people are prepared to surrender their guns voluntarily, how can the U.S. government confiscate an appreciable fraction of our country's nearly 200 million privately owned firearms? We know that it is possible to set up weapons-free zones in certain locations—commercial airports and many courthouses and, lately, some troubled big-city high schools and housing projects. The sacrifices of privacy and convenience, and the costs of paying guards, have been thought worth the (perceived) gain in security. No doubt it would be possible, though it would probably not be easy, to make weapons-free zones of shopping centers, department stores, movie theaters, ball parks. But it is not obvious how one would cordon off the whole of an open society.

Voluntary programs have been ineffectual. From time to time community-action groups or police departments have sponsored "turn in your gun" days, which are nearly always disappointing. Sometimes the government offers to buy guns at some price. This approach has been endorsed by Senator Chafee and the *Los Angeles Times*. Jonathan Alter, of *News-*

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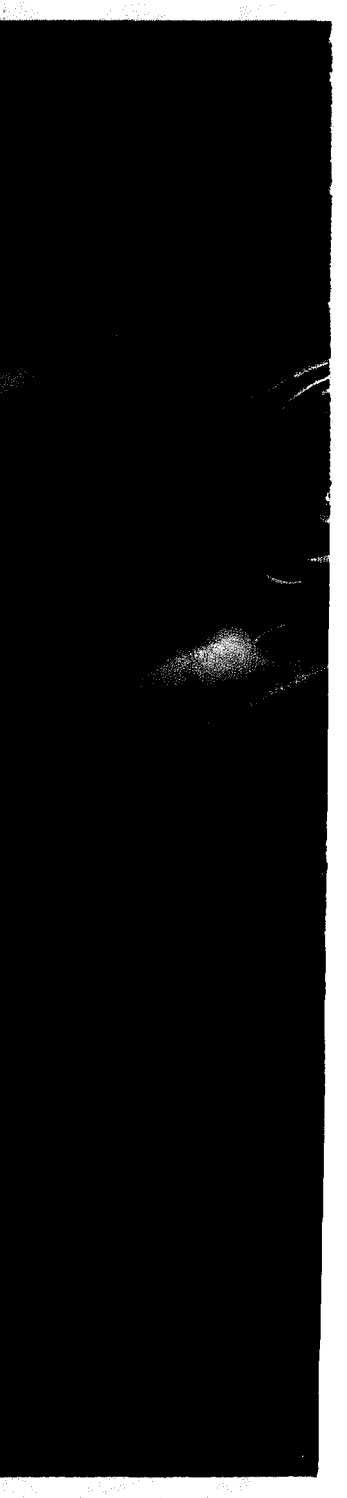

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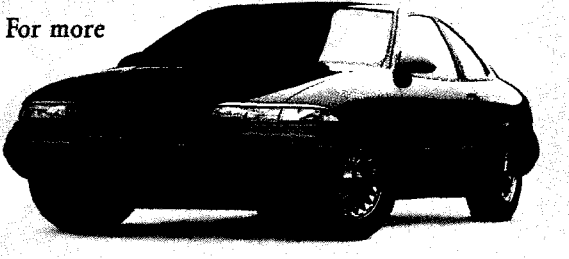

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LINCOLN

What A Luxury Car Should Be

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week, has suggested a variation on this theme: youngsters could exchange their guns for a handshake with Michael Jordan or some other sports hero. If the price offered exceeds that at which a gun can be bought on the street, one can expect to see plans of this kind yield some sort of harvest—as indeed they have. But it is implausible that these schemes will actually result in a less-dangerous population. Government programs to buy up surplus cheese cause more cheese to be produced without affecting the availability of cheese to people who want to buy it. So it is with guns.

One could extend the concept of intermittent roadblocks of the sort approved by the Supreme Court for discouraging drunk driving. Metal detectors could be positioned on every street corner, or ambulatory metal-detector squads could check people randomly, or hidden magnetometers could be installed around towns, to detect concealed weapons. As for firearms kept in homes (about half of American households), warrantless searches might be rationalized on the well-established theory that probable cause is not required when authorities are trying to correct dangers to public safety rather than searching for evidence of a crime.

In a recent "town hall" meeting in California, President Bill Clinton used the word "sweeps," which he did not define, to describe how he would confiscate firearms if it were up to him. During the past few years the Chicago Housing Authority chairman, Vincent Lane, has ordered "sweeps" of several gang-ridden public-housing projects, meaning warrantless searches of people's homes by uniformed police officers looking for contraband. Lane's ostensible premise was that possession of firearms by tenants constituted a lease violation that, as a conscientious landlord, he was obliged to do something about. The same logic could justify any administrative search. City health inspectors in Chicago were recently authorized to conduct warrantless searches for lead hazards in residential paint. Why not lead hazards in residential closets and nightstands? Someone has probably already thought of it.

IGNORING THE ULTIMATE SOURCES OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE

THE American experience with prohibition has been that black marketeers—often professional criminals—move in to profit when legal markets are closed down or disturbed. In order to combat them, new laws and law-enforcement techniques are developed, which are circumvented almost as soon as they are put in place. New and yet more stringent laws are enacted, and greater sacrifices of civil liberties and privacy demanded and submitted to. But in this case the problem, crime and violence, will not go away, because guns and ammunition (which, of course, won't go away either) do not cause it. One cannot expect people to quit seeking new weapons as long as the tactical advantages of weapons are seen to outweigh the costs imposed by prohibition. Nor can one expect large numbers of people to surrender firearms they already own. The only way to make people give up their guns is to create a world in which guns are perceived as having little value. This world will come into being when criminals choose not to use guns because the penalties for being caught with them are too great, and when ordinary citizens don't think they need firearms because they aren't afraid of criminals anymore.

Neither of these eventualities seems very likely without substantial departures in law-enforcement policy. Politicians' nostrums—increasing the punishment for crime, slapping a few more death-penalty provisions into the code—are taken seriously by few students of the crime problem. The existing penalties for predatory crimes are quite severe enough. The problem is that they are rarely meted out in the real world. The penalties formally published by the code are in practice steeply discounted, and criminals recognize that the judicial and penal systems cannot function without bargaining in the vast majority of cases.

This problem is not obviously one that legislation could solve. Constitutional ideas about due process of law make the imposition of punishments extraordinarily expensive and difficult. Like the tax laws, the criminal laws are basically voluntary affairs. Our system isn't geared to a world of wholesale disobedience. Recalibrating the system simply by increasing its overall harshness would probably offend and then shock the public long before any of its benefits were felt.

To illustrate, consider the prospect of getting serious about carrying out the death penalty. In recent years executions have been running at one or two dozen a year. As the late Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart observed, those selected to die constitute a "capriciously selected random handful" taken from a much larger number of men and women who, just as deserving of death, receive prison sentences. It is not easy to be exact about that much larger number. But as an educated guess, taking into account only the most serious murders—the ones that were either premeditated or committed in the course of a dangerous felony—there are perhaps 5,000 prisoners a year who could plausibly be executed in the United States: say, 100,000 executions in the next twenty years. It is hard to think that the death penalty, if imposed on this scale, would not noticeably change the behavior of potential criminals. But what else in national life or citizens' character would have to change in order to make that many executions acceptable? Since 1930 executions in the United States have never exceeded 200 a year. At any such modest rate of imposition, rational criminals should

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CRIME—BAD

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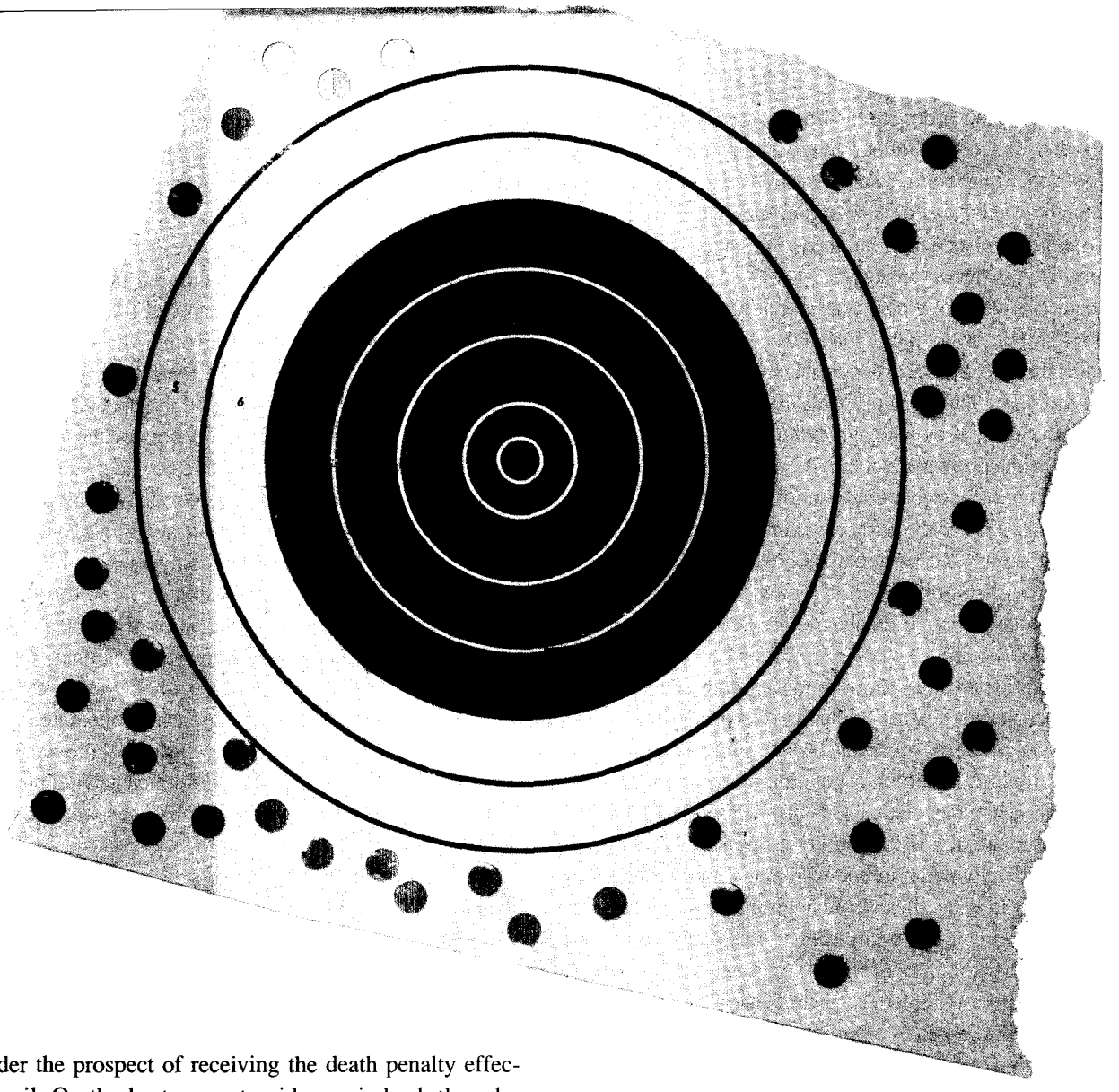

consider the prospect of receiving the death penalty effectively nil. On the best current evidence, indeed, they do. Documentation of the deterrent effect of the death penalty, as compared with that of long prison sentences, has been notoriously hard to produce.

The problem is not simply that criminals pay little attention to the punishments in the books. Nor is it even that they also know that for the majority of crimes, their chances of being arrested are small. The most important reason for criminal behavior is this: the income that offenders can earn in the world of crime, as compared with the world of work, all too often makes crime appear to be the better choice.

Thus the crime bill that Bill Clinton introduced last year, which provides for more prisons and police officers, should be of only very limited help. More prisons means that fewer violent offenders will have to be released early in order to make space for new arrivals; perhaps fewer plea bargains will have to be struck—all to the good. Yet a moment's reflection should make clear that one more criminal locked up does not necessarily mean one less criminal on the street. The situation is very like one that conservationists and hunters have always understood. Populations of game animals readily recover from hunting seasons but not from loss of habitat. Mean streets, when there are few legitimate entry-level opportunities for young men, are a criminal habitat, so to speak, in the social ecology of modern American cities. Cull however much one will, the habitat will be reoccupied promptly after its previous occupant is sent away. So social science has found.

Similarly, whereas increasing the number of police officers cannot hurt, and may well increase people's subjective feelings of security, there is little evidence to suggest that doing so will diminish the rate of crime. Police forces are basically reactive institutions. At any realistically sustainable level of staffing they must remain so. Suppose 100,000 officers were added to police rosters nationwide, as proposed in the current crime bill. This would amount to an overall personnel increase of about 18 percent, which would

EDUCATION AND THE LACK OF JOBS AND THE DISINTEGRATION OF FAMILIES.

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be parceled out according to the iron laws of democratic politics—distributed throughout states and congressional districts—rather than being sent to the areas that most need relief. Such an increase, though unprecedented in magnitude, is far short of what would be needed to pacify some of our country's worst urban precincts.

There is a challenge here that is quite beyond being met with tough talk. Most public officials can see the mismatch between their tax base and the social entropies they are being asked to repair. There simply isn't enough money; existing public resources, as they are now employed, cannot possibly solve the crime problem. But mayors and senators and police chiefs must not say so out loud: too-disquieting implications would follow. For if the authorities are incapable of restoring public safety and personal security under the existing ground rules, then obviously the ground rules must change, to give private initiative greater scope. Self-help is the last refuge of nonscoundrels.

Communities must, in short, organize more effectively to protect themselves against predators. No doubt this means encouraging properly qualified private citizens to possess and carry firearms legally. It is not morally tenable—nor, for that matter, is it even practical—to insist that police officers, few of whom are at a risk remotely as great as are the residents of many city neighborhoods, retain a monopoly on legal firearms. It is needless to fear giving honest men and women the training and equipment to make it possible for them to take back their own streets.

Over the long run, however, there is no substitute for addressing the root causes of crime—bad education and lack of job opportunities and the disintegration of families. Root causes are much out of fashion nowadays as explanations of criminal behavior, but fashionable or not, they are fundamental. *The root cause of crime is that for certain people, predation is a rational occupational choice.* Conventional crime-control measures, which by stiffening punishments or raising the probability of arrest aim to make crime pay less, cannot consistently affect the behavior of people who believe that their alternatives to crime will pay virtually nothing. Young men who did not learn basic literacy and numeracy skills before dropping out of their wretched public schools may not have been worth hiring at the minimum wage set by George Bush, let alone at the higher, indexed minimum wage that has recently been under discussion by the Clinton Administration. Most independent studies of the effects of raising minimum wages show a similar pattern of excluding the most vulnerable. This displacement, in turn, makes young men free, in the nihilistic, nothing-to-lose sense, to dedicate their lives to crime. Their legitimate opportunities, always precarious in a society where race and class still matter, often diminish to the point of being for all intents and purposes absent.

Unfortunately, many progressive policies work out in the same way as increases in the minimum wage—as taxes on employment. One example is the Administration's pending proposal to make employer-paid health insurance mandatory and universal. Whatever the undoubted benefits of the plan, a payroll tax is needed to make it work. Another example: in recent years the use of the "wrongful discharge" tort and other legal innovations has swept through the courts of more than half the states, bringing to an end the era of "employment at will," when employees (other than civil servants) without formal contracts—more than three quarters of the work force—could be fired for good reason, bad reason, or no reason at all. Most commentators celebrated the loss of the at-will rule. How could one object to a new legal tenet that prohibited only arbitrary and oppressive behavior by employers?

But the costs of the rule are not negligible, only hidden. At-will employment meant that companies could get out of the relationship as easily as employees could. In a world where dismissals are expensive rather than cheap, and involve lawyers and the threat of lawsuits, rational employers must become more fastidious about whom they hire. By raising the costs of ending the relationship, one automatically raises the threshold of entry. The burdens of the rule fall unequally. Worst hit are entry-level applicants who have little or no employment history to show that they would be worth their pay.

Many other tax or regulatory schemes, in the words of Professor Walter Williams, of George Mason University, amount to sawing off the bottom rungs of the ladder of economic opportunity. By suppressing job creation and further diminishing legal employment opportunities for young men on the margin of the work force, such schemes amount to an indirect but unequivocal subsidy to crime.

The solution to the problem of crime lies in improving the chances of young men. Easier said than done, to be sure. No one has yet proposed a convincing program for checking all the dislocating forces that government assistance can set in motion. One relatively straightforward change would be reform of the educational system. Nothing guarantees prudent behavior like a sense of the future, and with average skills in reading, writing, and math, young people can realistically look forward to constructive employment and the straight life that steady work makes possible.

But firearms are nowhere near the root of the problem of violence. As long as people come in unlike sizes, shapes, ages, and temperaments, as long as they diverge in their taste for risk and their willingness and capacity to prey on other people or to defend themselves from predation, and above all as long as some people have little or nothing to lose by spending their lives in crime, dispositions to violence will persist.

This is what makes the case for the right to bear arms, not the Second Amendment. It is foolish to let anything ride on hopes for effective gun control. As long as crime pays as well as it does, we will have plenty of it, and honest folk must choose between being victims and defending themselves.

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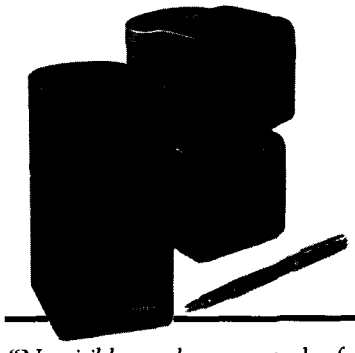

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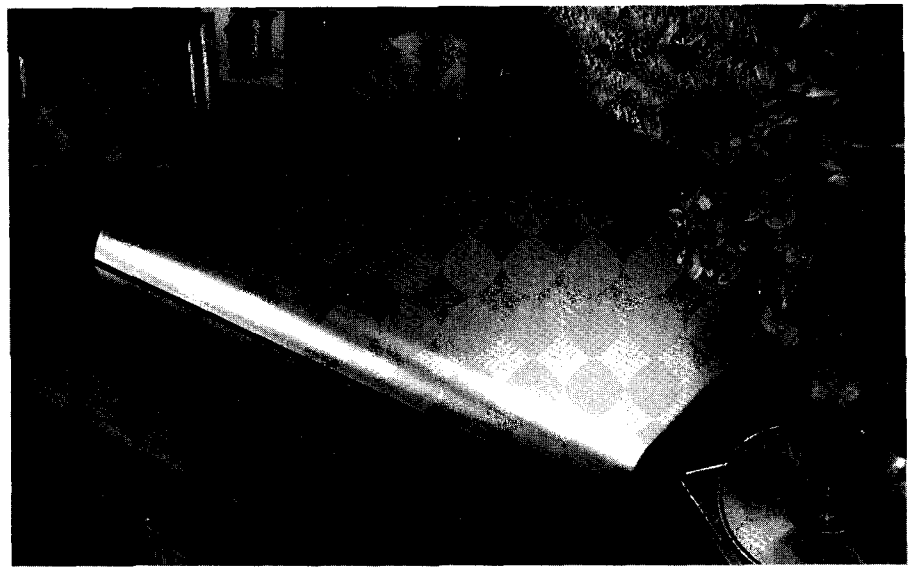

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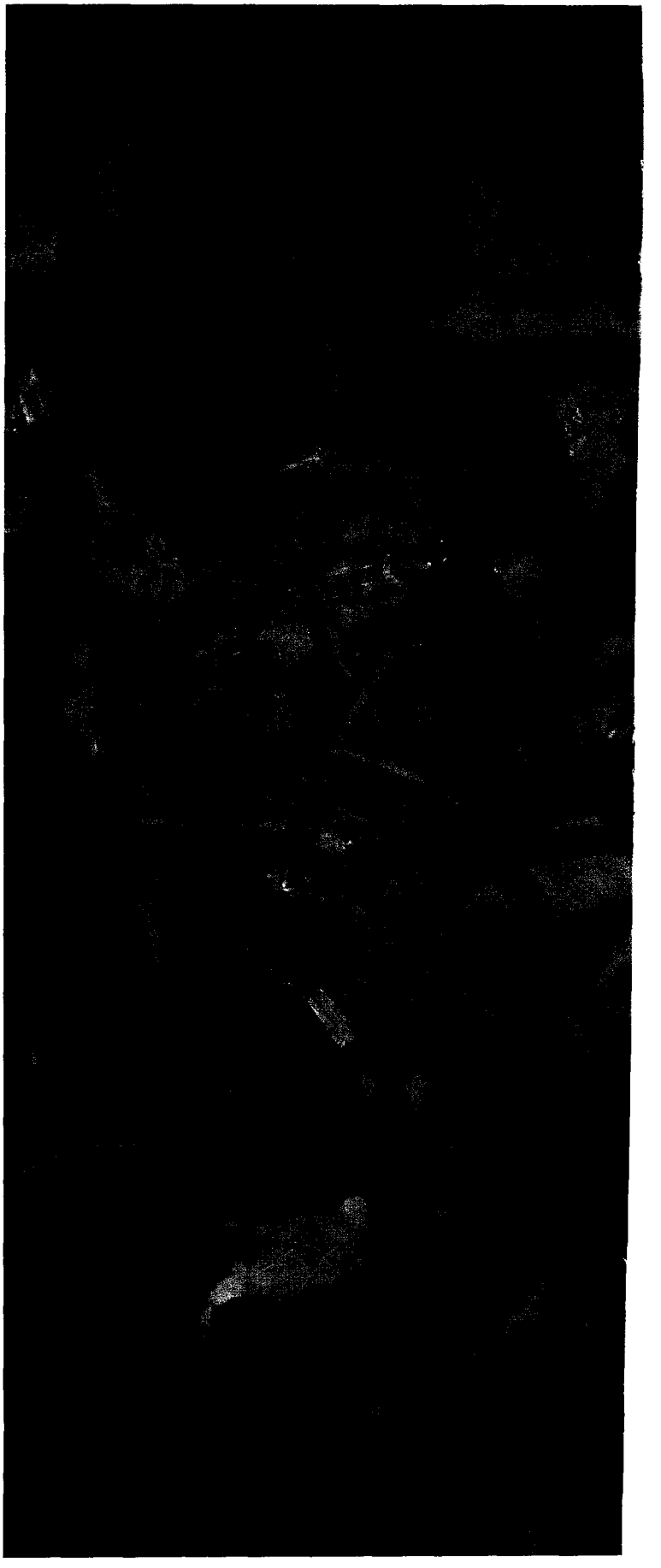
The Drowning

by EDWARD J. DELANEY



MY father came from the old country in middle age, and to his last he instilled in me the peculiarities of his native tongue. Even now, at the age of seventy, I am left with his manners of speech, his inflections and growls. He left me with his sayings, and I recall one in particular, his favorite, a half-comic shout of equal parts exasperation and petition: "Help me, Father Alphonsus!"

Most often this was uttered in moments of high disgust. My father worked as a hod carrier until he was seventy, a job that condemned him through all those years to being eternally strong and eternally exhausted. At night, sitting in his chair in the parlor of our tenement, he would brood over the five of us, his children, as we bickered over one thing or another—the last scrap of the night's loaf, a new toy pilfered from a classmate—and he would take on the resigned look of a condemned man, and invoke the name of this priest, a man he had known long ago. And then, if my mother didn't rush from the kitchen to herd us from danger, my father would often hit one of us.

Even late in life he had ridged muscles along his chest and back. His face was etched with a sunburned and skeptical squint. When we were young, he hit hard. When he sat down again, walled in now by the wails of a child, he'd rub the sting from his cracked hands and fall into a black mood. "Forgive me, Father Alphonsus," he'd mumble. The meaning always seemed clear. My father was a man of weakness and vices, and he made no apologies. He prayed for strength in the face of us. Much later in life I found myself praying aloud to Father Alphonsus a time or two, such as when my

His father had things he needed to say. Important things. What happened on Father Alphonsus's final day was one of them

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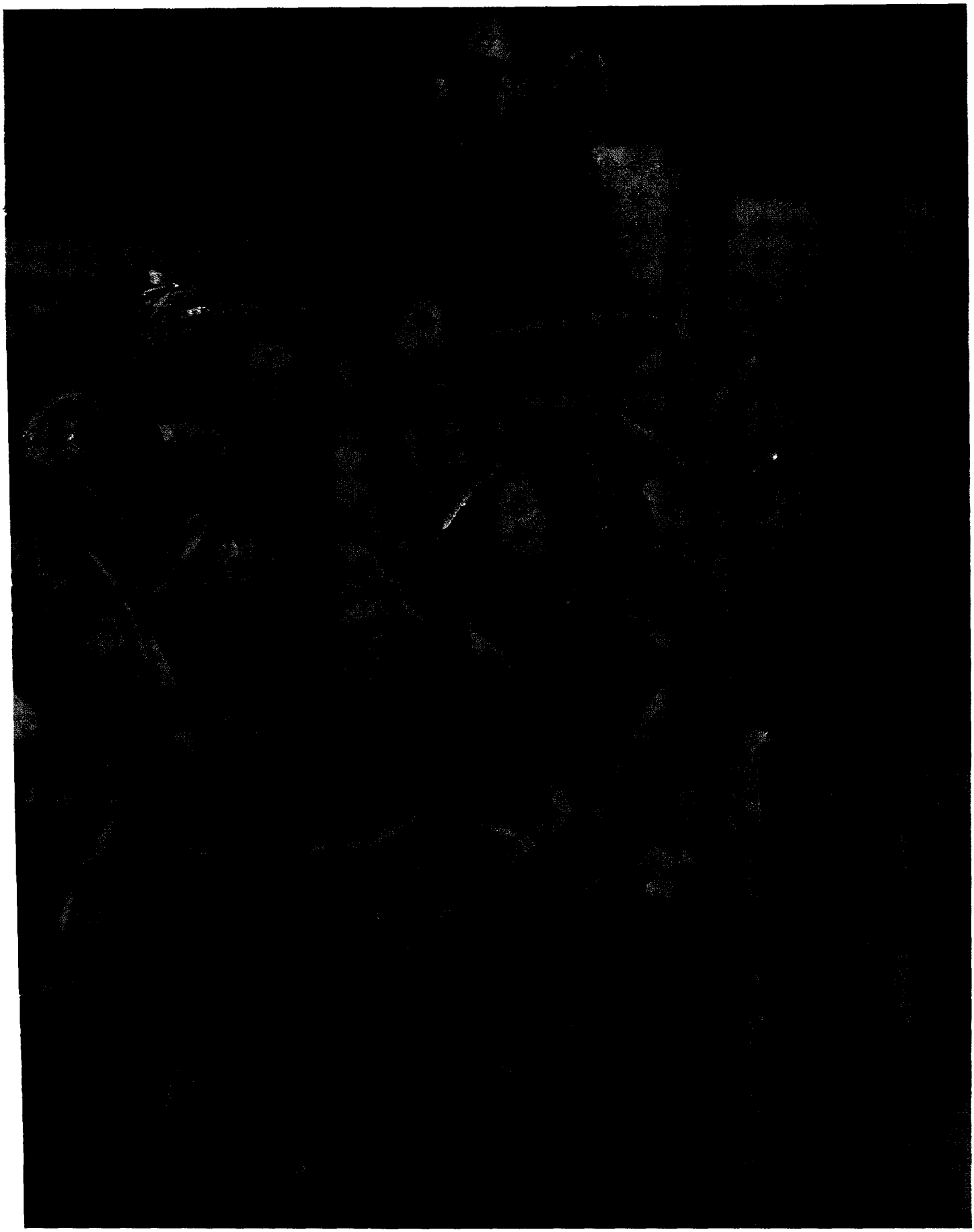

Illustration by John Howard

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own son stole a car. The matter was quietly settled in the office of a police-department captain, with the victim of the theft staring at me from across the table and my son quietly sobbing. Father Alphonsus, the faceless man of grace, hovered ethereally over the proceedings.

Alphonsus, my father told us, was the most well-intentioned man he had ever known, "if such things should count for anything." Alphonsus was a near relation, the keeper of faith in Fenagh, the hamlet on Lough Ree where my father was born.

"He was a man who knew nothing but to offer the best he could," my father said. "I have neither his patience nor his benevolence." My father wasn't cruel, but he lived a life of bricks on his back, the stabbing workday sun, and day's-end liquor bought with the desire for the most liquid at the lowest negotiable rate. He'd drink and play our battered phonograph, closing his eyes and giving himself over to the crackling arias. Though he often invoked the name of his old village priest, he found no priest here to be worthy, and he fell away from the Church despite my mother's prodding. When I was seventeen and was offered a scholarship to Boston College, he complained bitterly that I could do better than to deal with Jesuits, insincere bastards that they were. I suspected that my father could have done much better than his dire life, but he seemed not to want to, couldn't fully engage in the way things were. It didn't seem unusual that a hod carrier would prize his books, his Greek classics and sweeping histories. He was Irish, and illegal. He could not become lace-curtain Irish, and my father had nothing good to say about those who were. He maintained through his life the sidelong glance he had learned when he first came off the boat, before he found my mother and married her.

This Father Alphonsus was one of the few people mentioned from my father's youth. I had no sense of what the man was like, his look or manner. At times I wondered if he was real. But one day, late in his life, my father came to feel a desperate need to tell me a story.

This would have been 1952. My father was about the same age as I am now, but he was much closer to death than I assume myself to be. A resolute smoker of filterless Camel cigarettes, he was in the advanced stages of cancer of the larynx, which at the time was virtually incurable. In the nursing home, in a wicker wheelchair, he talked compulsively despite the ongoing strangulation of his voice box. He'd take a deep breath and then release it in long, rattling phrases, and I would sit and listen to monologues about his job and friends and enemies and crooks and aces. Later, in his yellow-walled hospital room, he'd go on and on while I watched the rectangle of sunlight glide imperceptibly across the waxed floors and then fade and die. I sensed in all this talk a spiraling movement toward something central. He had, he told me, things he needed to say. Important things. What happened on Father Alphonsus's final day was one.

ALPHONSUS had been the youngest of six, born six weeks after his father's death by pneumonia, and from the moment of his birth his mother had unshakable plans for him. Alphonsus would be her last chance, and she was the kind of woman who felt that producing a priest was a fitting and necessary act of completion to her maternal career. From the earliest age Alphonsus was groomed for sacred duty. She made him tiny knitted vestments and pasteboard altars as playthings, enlisting his older brothers, rougher boys, to encourage Alphonsus to believe that he was different. Alphonsus's mother spoke to him nightly about the duties he would assume, bedtime tales about faith and good works. His oldest brother, Eamon, explained to him about celibacy, and none too charitably. But Alphonsus listened and nodded. The details Eamon so eagerly shared, using examples of his own sordid exploits as proof of what Alphonsus would miss, horrified the younger boy. Eamon waited then for a response. Alphonsus's nightly sessions with his mother allowed him to apply the appropriate word: *sacrifice*. "Good lad," Eamon said. Alphonsus, even as a child, was looking forward to the priest's solitary life. His heroes were the Irish hermits of the Middle Ages. He read stories of their lives on the rocky islands off the west Irish coast, lives of gray skies and gray seas. These stories filled him with awe for the heroism embodied in shunning the world.

Sacrifice did not define the process of Alphonsus's rise to the priesthood. He slid through seminary and took up his works back at St. Enda's in Fenagh, his boyhood church. When his superior, the aged Father O'Donnell, passed away on the night after Christmas, 1906, the twenty-six-year-old Alphonsus became his village's spiritual leader.

Nights, standing in his bedroom as rain washed the windows of the drafty stone rectory, he thought that he didn't regret what he had become but that he wouldn't ultimately measure up. The feeling wasn't new. He had completed his studies with neither distinction nor exceptional difficulty. He had never considered himself brilliant, but he had enough intelligence to see his own utter lack of intuition. Could a priest, confronted with the fluid nature of reality, afford not to rely heavily on hunches and inspiration? In his small room in the seminary he prayed long and searchingly, believing that a sudden feeling of enlightenment or resolve might be transmitted from the Creator. But when he finished with his prayers, he felt nothing.

In the first dozen years or so after ordination things went relatively well. His posting to the village seemed clear notice that not much was expected of him from his superiors. Alphonsus presided over the reassuring cycle of dawn masses, funerals, and weddings; he taught catechism and organized a football team of the younger boys. These were the things Alphonsus had imagined himself doing effectively. He'd stand at the edge of a rain-softened field, the winds off the lough making the edges of his cassock snap and tighten around his legs, and he'd watch the boys, some playing bare-

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foot, as they kicked the ball about. He felt like a giant then, affecting a sternness he recalled in O'Donnell. He hoped to instill in them the fear he'd held of the old man. But at the same time, he felt small and weak in the face of the unanticipated crisis. It had not yet happened, but he knew its inevitability, if not its form. He felt that these things could be seen by the shrewd among his parishioners: His stammering uncertainty when faced with the difficulty of a pregnant girl, Amanda Flynn, asking to be quietly married, even though half the town had already heard whispered dispatches of her condition. Or the town's thieves and adulterers and his sheeplike acceptance of them sitting in the front pews, their faces masks of haughty and false devotion. He would meet their eyes briefly and then look away.

One day, after years of this stoic service, Alphonsus awakened early to a knocking on the door. This tapping was light but relentless, on and on until he had let his eyes adjust and find the phosphorescent hands of his clock. It was three o'clock. An early riser, Alphonsus was surprised to be rolled out of bed, and the insistent softness of the knocks as he descended the stairs indicated to him a call for last rites, perhaps for the elder John Flanagan, who'd been kicked shoeing a horse and was not expected to recover. At the door he found a boy, perhaps ten years old, shivering.

"Father, you have to hear a confession," the boy said.

"Pardon?"

"A confession. You hear confessions, don't you?"

"Well, I thought you were . . ." Alphonsus felt a twinge of anger. "Of course I hear confessions. But I generally don't find children on my doorstep at odd hours. Now, get inside here. We'll do it in the study, and it had better be good."

"It's not I who needs to," the boy said. "The person is waiting inside the church."

What was this? Alphonsus made the boy stand in the entry while he ascended the stairs to change clothes. The oddity of this demanded confession made him suspicious. For a shaky moment he worried that this would be a robbery. He sat at the edge of the bed, still in his underclothing, his cassock across his knees. He tried to place the boy's face. The child was not one of his footballers; the face was reminiscent of the O'Neals, a family of beggars who lived in a beaten-down mud cottage outside the town, near the lough shore. Alphonsus heard the door below open and then shut. The thought of what might be afoot—being lured out by the boy and then thrashed for his pocket watch—made him wary. Alphonsus went to the bedroom window and looked out. The boy had left the house and now stood on the dark lawn with a man. They were shadowy forms, but he could see that they were looking up at him. The man raised his arm and waved. Alphonsus waved back and then held out a raised index finger: *one moment*. The man nodded.

When Alphonsus came out the door, he felt the glassy cold cutting through his sweater. The man and boy moved forward to meet him, in the steam from their own breathing. The man, his face hidden by the pulled-down front of his cap, was staring at the ground.

"The boy said you'd gone inside the church," Alphonsus said.

"No, Father. He's right inside the confessional."

They stayed in the yard while Alphonsus went in. He fumbled for a candle at the back of the nave, still half waiting for hands to seize at him from the dark. But in the weak light the church was still. He entered the confessional, snuffed the candle, and slid back his screen.

"Are you there?" Alphonsus said.

"Aye, Father."

"Then go ahead."

The voice began its mumbled recitations, and as he waited, Alphonsus rubbed his eyes of sleep and wondered about

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A HUMDRUM LIFE

I am a white cow with horns
but no peripheral vision,
full face you would think
I could see inside and out
my eyes are so big and round.
My nails click on cement in
a different music from bells
of herds in the Pyrenees
which sound like Tibetan
states of mind rather than
these incongruences.
I have been used as a joke
lost in a china closet,
I have been abused for my milk,
I do not have a family
or friends. The farmer I sought
did not exist who would take me
into his sweet growing pastures.
I finally accepted
an offer to work on the street.
Here I do not have to know
how I stand out in the crowd,
blind as it is to me.
The noon hour is hot,
my hide does not improve.
No great wishes, like trees,
stand between for shadow.

—ALICE ROSE GEORGE

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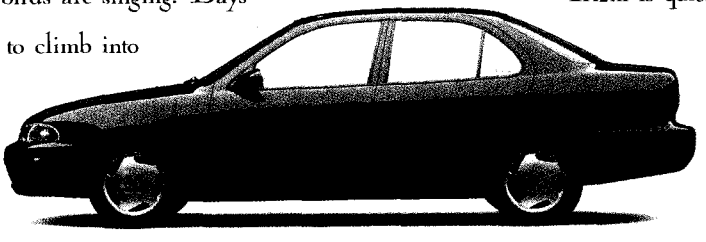

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the elder John Flanagan and whether he had lived through the night. Alphonsus was feeling light and electric, not quite anchored in the dark. He realized that the man had stopped talking.

"Go ahead," Alphonsus said.

"Father, I've breached the Fifth Commandment."

Alphonsus was silent. He was sure the man was confused. "Do you mean adultery, then?" he said.

"No."

"Tell me the Fifth Commandment."

"Thou shalt not kill."

Alphonsus felt strangely calm. This was the first time he'd encountered such an infraction. A killer! He silently recalled the seminary lessons: *Forgiveness is the priest's task, punishment the law's.*

"Who?" Alphonsus said.

"I don't know his name."

"Who knows about this?"

"No one, Father."

"Not your friends outside?"

"Not even them. Only you."

"And where is the dead man?"

"In the woods near the lough."

"Is that where you killed him?"

"That's where I did him, Father."

Alphonsus leaned back against his bench. He told himself to go slow.

"And while you were standing over his body there in the woods, were you feeling remorse for your act?"

"I felt sorry I had to breach a commandment."

"Was it self-defense?"

"In a manner of speaking."

"What manner was that?"

"That we are all in danger, Father."

"Some men, to prove their remorse, might turn themselves in."

"Aye," the voice said. "Some might."

"And why not you?"

"Others will be involved. Others who don't deserve such troubles."

"How so? Troubles from whom?"

"From the Black and Tans."

"Oh, my," Alphonsus said. He ran his fingers along the starched smoothness of his collar. Matters had taken on a more troubling dimension. He now understood that the dead man was a policeman from the RIC, the Royal Irish Constabulary. Four years had passed since the Easter Rising in Dublin, and in this four years of undeclared civil war the RICs, seen by many as agents of British rule, had often been targets. The RICs were Irishmen, but more and more the younger men had left the ranks, some openly disavowing their ties, others simply slipping out, often to England. Those who remained were the older hands, who after years of service were not sure whether to be more afraid of the Irish Republican Army or of a lost pension. But with each new death of a constable came more recrimination and violence.

The Black and Tans, since they'd been brought in from England, had begun a policy of retribution that was as simple as it was vicious. When a policeman was killed, the Tans generally burned the village nearest the killing. Alphonsus did not need to calculate the distance to the shores of Lough Ree: as a sport fisherman, he knew the lough, a landlocked elbow of water a mile wide and eleven long.

"Father . . . ?"

"Yes."

"My penance?"

Good God! Was this how simple it should be? Alphonsus was speechless. Penance? He sat for a long time, thinking, wondering whether he could somehow find a way to consult with someone. What was the penance for such an act?

"I can grant no penance yet," Alphonsus said. "I want you to return here at the same time tomorrow night. I want you to do nothing except pray. Take no action. Now, where is this body?"

"Father, I don't know if . . ."

"Good Lord, man! Tell me where this poor lad is, so he can receive the sacrament due him!"

"Do you know the path to the rock formations on the east side of the lough?"

"I do."

"He's twenty or thirty yards north of the path, about a quarter mile up from the shore."

"How did he get there?"

"He was answering a call for help."

The man fell silent. Alphonsus could hear his breathing. "Father?" he said. "Father, I thought you had to grant penance."

"Not in the case of the Fifth Commandment," Alphonsus said. "Most people have no experience in this." He quivered at his own lie, but his voice remained firm.

As Alphonsus sat in the confessional, listening to the receding footsteps and then the slam of the church door, he rubbed his hands on his knees, trying to calm himself. Indeed, he was thinking of the town of Balbriggan, which had burned a few weeks before at the hands of the Black and Tans.

But, Alphonsus wondered, could this man who had spoken to him in the confessional truly be repentant, having known what his actions would lead to? Alphonsus thought not. But he had, from his training, clear guidelines: as much as he wanted this man to turn himself in, he could not require it. And doing so probably wouldn't help, once the dead man was discovered. The Black and Tans, so called because of their odd makeshift uniforms of khaki army trousers and black RIC tunics, were men in whom the cruelty of war had become ingrained. They were being paid ten shillings a day, good money, but still they often sought as payment the suffering of those they saw as enemies, which was nearly anyone Irish.

Alphonsus relit his candle. The movement of the shadows

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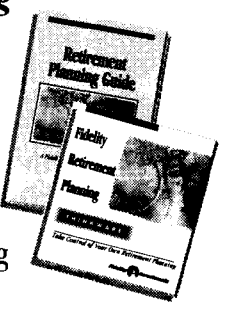

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in the boxed closeness of the confessional made him think of the lick of flames. The Black and Tans' terror felt close at hand. Why should anyone be absolved?

IN the morning he offered sunrise service to a handful of sleepy elders and then returned to the rectory for breakfast. The housekeeper, Mrs. Toole, had brought in a two-day-old copy of *The Irish Times*, and over his toast he went through it slowly, looking for news on the Troubles. In the village he had heard talk of how the Black and Tans had taken to roaring down Dublin streets on a lorry, wildly firing their weapons; in Kiltartan a woman was dead, hit by stray shots with a child in her arms. But in the *Times* he found no mention.

He changed into his gardening clothes. His flower beds faced the woods, and at the edge of the trees he had vegetables. He spent hours here, for the priesthood had not proved to be excessively demanding. Many days he stood at his fence, watching the movements of the drawn carts and of his parishioners, the cottiers coming from the clodded potato fields. Far off, on an open meadow, unfurled bolts of linen bleached in the sun, long white bars against the hard green. Today, in the garden, he contemplated the early-morning confession, and the meeting that night. He felt ludicrous standing here in the garden, but at the same time he wanted to be nowhere else, for he was alone.

Down the rutted lane that curved behind the near cottages he saw Sean Flynn, the retired schoolteacher, walking his dog. The animal, runty and of no clear breed, dug at a rabbit hole. Flynn, leaning on his cane and softly cursing the dog, saw Alphonsus, and ambled up.

"Father!"

"Mr. Flynn."

"Have we been fishing this week, Father?"

"I confess I haven't. But soon."

"Father, the weather's turning cold."

"I know, I know. It's pitiful that I haven't."

"Today, then."

"No, I have some matters."

"Father, clear your mind."

"Perhaps."

"You really should."

"I think I will, Mr. Flynn. Really."

"Today."

"Yes, today."

It would be his reason, then, to go to the lough. In the house, packing his equipment, he slipped in his stole and oils. He put on a clean cassock and adjusted his biretta, his priest's crown with its hard sides and pompon. Mrs. Toole was down below, dusting in the dining room, and he went to the kitchen to pack a jam sandwich.

"I'll be off fishing now," he said.

"Today?" she said.

"Why not?"

"With Mr. Flanagan on his deathbed from that horse kicking him?"

"Um, well, I'll be back by midafternoon. I heard he's doing better."

"Really? Who told you?"

"Mr. Flynn. We were just talking outside."

Mrs. Toole went back to dusting the china cabinet. "You and the fishing," she said.

"Every chance I get," Alphonsus said.

"Father?"

"Yes?"

"You're fishing dressed like that?"

"If anyone does need last rites, I don't want to do it in my fishing clothes. I shan't be long, anyway."

THE row from his usual fishing spot to the shoreline edge of the path was longer than he was used to. After pulling his boat onto the rocks, he walked up and down the path several times, first making sure no one was near, and then beginning to scan the thick woods for any sign of the body. The killing had been in the dark, he assumed, so perhaps the instructions were confused. The day had become brilliantly crisp, and he couldn't see anything human amid the play of shadows and light. Alphonsus stepped off the path and walked broad circles, searching, pulling up the hem of the cassock so he wouldn't get muddy. He kept his eye on the path, too, in case someone came. He wouldn't have an answer if asked what he was doing.

After an hour he sat. He unfolded his sandwich from its greased paper and ate, thinking. He had, in his estimation, covered nearly every possible spot where a body might be. He wondered if this was a hoax. He was too exhausted and tense to fish, and the winds beyond the woods seemed to be picking up. Had he been fishing, he might have been in dangerous waters. He wished he didn't have to return to the village, to the confessional. Bad things were to happen, and he had no idea how to stop them. If he didn't find the body, someone else would: the absence of this constable would eventually become known. Though some constables deserted, slipping away to the north or across to Britain, Alphonsus reasoned that only proof of a desertion would curb the Black and Tans' impulse for destruction.

His calling was powerful, but an unwillingness to absolve the man in the confessional was stronger, a mixture of revenge and principle he couldn't shake free of. He didn't know if that man had been an O'Neal, but he was certain the man was like the O'Neals, someone embittered with his lot and perhaps too willing to blame everything on the British. But he had to absolve, to heed his vows. When his sandwich was gone, he walked down to the lough and drank at water's edge from cupped hands. Back up the path, but now not as far from shore, he plunged into the woods, again searching.

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The body was half hidden with wet leaves, the accumulation on the windward side like dunes overtaking a pyramid. Alphonsus knelt, put his hand on the shoulder, and gently rolled the man on his back.

"Hello, Thomas," Alphonsus said.

He hadn't considered the possibility that he would know the deceased. The body was that of Thomas Shanahan, a royal constable stationed at the RIC barracks on the other side of the lough. Thomas had from time to time come to mass at Alphonsus's church. Alphonsus had made a point of welcoming him, for he believed that all were equal in the eyes of God. Thomas was also a fisherman, and after mass they had often talked of their favorite spots. Thomas's face was clean, his clothes neatly straight. He wasn't in uniform but in thick wool trousers and shirt, as if off duty. Alphonsus turned him again, and now saw the crust of hardened blood on the back of his head. As he removed his oils and stole from his fishing kit, Alphonsus scanned the trees, ready to become prone should he hear footsteps.

Thomas was middle-aged, a bachelor who, Alphonsus sensed, was as private a person as he. Thomas lived in the RIC barracks, but in his conversations with Alphonsus never spoke of any of his mates. But of course one couldn't, in the same way that Alphonsus understood he would hear no mention of the Black and Tans and their tactics. Alphonsus, as he daubed the oils upon the cold face, assumed that Thomas had deplored all this, and Alphonsus didn't care to know different.

When he finished the last rites, Alphonsus sat for some time on a rock, looking at the body. How had Thomas come here? Had he been ambushed fishing? No rod or kit lay nearby, but those might have been spoils for the killer. He could go on speculating, but he couldn't avoid what he now planned to do. From his own bag Alphonsus extracted his trowel, the best he had been able to manage without being noticed. He walked in a circle around Thomas, looking for the softest and highest ground, and then knelt and began digging.

This act, he knew, transformed him. He had no business doing this. The dirt did not give way as easily as he'd imagined; he'd felt, coming out in the boat, that he could be back at the rectory by dusk. But the soil was choked with rocks. Hours into it, he stood back and looked at the pitiful rut he'd clawed out, and he laughed in despair.

"Tommy," he said to the body, "I damned well don't know what to do with you. This just isn't Christian, is it?" Tommy, on his side, stared out onto the lough.

Alphonsus peered up through the trees, not able to shed the sense that he was being watched. He had the feeling that the killer might come back, to see that the body was still there. The IRA wanted the body to be found, surely, so that a bloody raid by the Tans was inevitable. The killing of a fellow Irishman like Tommy would create doubt and ambivalence unless it was followed by the necessary retribution by the Brits. Was he being used in this? Did someone expect that Alphonsus himself was going to report the death? Or would the killer return, having thought things over, to put Tommy in a more conspicuous place?

His plan had been to bury Tommy, but Alphonsus now saw that he wasn't capable of finishing the job. The hole was barely two feet deep. Alphonsus recalled his grandfather's stories of the Famine, of skeletal men burying cloth-shrouded friends as packs of starving dogs gathered at the periphery, yelping with hunger and bloodlust, set to dig as soon as the living moved on.

"Forgive me, Tommy, but I can barely move now," Alphonsus said. "I thought my gardening had made me fit enough to undertake this."

A wind was picking up on the lough, making the water choppy and whitecapped. The row back would be dangerous if he didn't go soon. He felt a rising panic. He would have to drop Tommy into the deep waters—he saw this. He'd not be back until well after dark, but his midnight confession awaited. He'd have to be there or the killer would certainly have suspicions.

Down by the water he searched for a way to weight the body. Rocks were all around, but no means of attachment. His fishing kit could be loaded with them, but the top was loose and the ballast might fall out as the package sank. Alphonsus saw one way to do what he needed to do. Standing above the body, he removed his cassock, and then pulled off Thomas's pants and shirt.

Getting the cassock onto the body was easy. Thomas was a bigger man than he, but the cassock was loose. Alphonsus adjusted the braces of Thomas's pants and rolled up the pants and shirt cuffs so that he was clothed for the stealthy trip back to the rectory. In a pocket was a purse with Thomas's papers and a sizable bit of money. Alphonsus was surprised that this hadn't been taken.

THE boat rode low on the water with two men in it, the dead one loaded down with stones, the live one weighted by the terror of being caught. Alphonsus had used his fishing line to bind the bottom of the cassock around Thomas's ankles to hold the rocks; the collar was snug at the neck. The last trace of sunlight was nearly gone. Alphonsus stroked hard against the winds, slicing out toward the rough middle of the lough.

He was a sinner now—he could see that. He would dump a dead man into the cold waters as if he were a load of garbage, would grant penance to a murderer. He would return to his rectory, slip past Mrs. Toole so that she wouldn't notice his inexplicable change of clothing, and spend the rest of his life trying to live with this. And all he wanted was for no one to be hurt. So be it. If this body somehow resurfaced or washed to shore, with a cracked skull and wrapped in a cassock, so be it. Or if the Tans correctly interpreted Tommy

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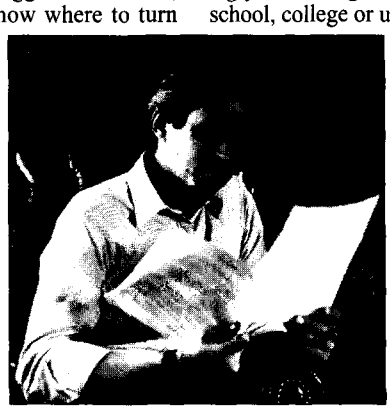

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Shanahan's disappearance and overran Fenagh anyway, so be it. "So be it, Tom," Alphonsus said. "A week will pass and you won't turn up, and they'll know, they'll know."

He stopped rowing. The moon shone through a break in the clouds, giving definition to the far edges of the lough. To say a prayer at a moment like this seemed crude and sacrilegious, desperate and artificial. But he prayed now anyway, prayed for guidance.

Nothing came to him. He felt that matters were on an inevitable course and he could do nothing but send Tommy to the bottom and then go home. "Do as we must do," he said to the body.

He grabbed the shoulders of the cassock. He crouched in the boat, the balance becoming uncertain, and then he lurched and Tom hit the gunwale. The boat was listing. Water was pouring in. He had imagined a noiseless letting-go of the body, but now Alphonsus was in a fight, and in his panic he wasn't sure whether he was trying to shove the body away or pull it back on board. But neither was happening and now he was underwater, the coldness and dark shockingly sudden. He looked up and could see only a single blurred spot of weak light. He wanted to reach for it, that moon in the sky over on the other side of the surface. His hands were still clenched to the bunched fabric of his own cassock, now weighted with death, and he let go of it, and the solid block that was Thomas grazed his leg and ankle and then was gone.

ALPHONSUS had been hanging on to the side of the overturned boat for some minutes when he decided that he would not return to Fenagh. That he would survive was not a given; the water was cold enough and his arms were tired enough from the digging that he felt almost nothing, except for the dull pain of the thick muscles along his neck. But he clung on, the wind and waves rocking him in crests and swells, until he was desperate enough to push away from the boat and swim for shore.

His thought, as he crawled out of the water on his hands and knees, was of his hat, his black biretta, floating like an ornate ship far out of reach, its black pompon now a keel. He had seen it from the boat, puffed by the wind and etched by moonlight, unwilling to sink with the cassock. The boat, too, would be found, far off on the lough, known by those fishermen who knew him.

In the woods he undressed, squeezed water from his clothing. He considered trying to light a fire. Naked in the cold air, he plunged into the water again to clean himself, and then dressed in the wet woolen shirt and trousers. His black brogans squished loudly when he walked, but he was moving quickly. In no time he was well up the path and along the rutted highway toward Dublin. By dawn he would find a ride in a chicken lorry, and by that evening he would use Tommy Shanahan's wet money to get a room over a public house by the docks. Three days later, his clothes dry and black stubble making his face lose its delicacy of appearance, he would bribe a dock worker to get him into the steerage of the first ship leaving Ireland. The dock worker would ask, "Why are you going?" The answer would be this: that the stowaway was a royal constable from near Fenagh, that he was running away, and that he hoped no one would find out. And when these words were out, the dock worker's face would be twisted with revulsion and the story of his flight would be common knowledge in Fenagh in a few days' time.

MY father, telling this story thirty-two years later in a wheelchair in the rest home where he would die, told me that this is how he came to be a man born in middle age, with a name picked from a city directory. He told me he felt the need to unburden himself, that my mother never knew, and that he was for that reason glad she had preceded him into death. He said this without a hint of expectation that I would say anything to console him, and I didn't. I couldn't. I was in my twenties then, leaning over the man who had hit me so hard and so frequently that I had gone to bed many nights wishing to be someone else, a different child. I should have said something. But I stared at him until a nurse came to us and said he needed to eat.

A few years ago I went to Ireland, for the simple reason that I am a devout Boston College football fan and that year they played a game in Dublin against West Point. I boarded an Aer Lingus 747 packed with alumni, and we sang drinking songs high over the Atlantic. Only on the day after the football game did I think to rent a car and take a drive. Asking in Dublin, I found no one who'd heard of Fenagh, but I set out toward Lough Ree, and on its eastern shore I got directions to the town. There I parked, and walked the length of its primary streets, and stood for a while in front of St. Enda's Church, without going in. At a small shop I talked to the keeper, a man older than I, and he told me he had a niece in Boston he sometimes went to visit. I told him I'd had a relative here, a Father Alphonsus.

"Of course," he said. "I've seen the plaque." He pointed me down the road toward a knoll overlooking the water. There, behind some overgrown brambles, I found an engraved plate, the size of an envelope maybe, mounted on a rock.

"Father Alphonsus Kelly, RIP. Drowned November 5, 1920." I stood on the knoll and looked at the harsh waters where this man had lost his life and become someone else. He was a man who became old and could not aspire to the better part of himself he believed he had squandered—who had come to find, I think, that in his exile he couldn't bring himself to try to be like Alphonsus, who indeed was a specter that floated over all our lives. Standing at the edge of the lough, I said a prayer for my father. I petitioned that he might be delivered from a purgatory of which I had been part.

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The Warlords of Natal

by BILL BERKELEY

The civil war that has been smoldering for the past decade has roots deep in the country's past and presages a troubled future for the new South Africa

IT is a measure of South Africa's schizophrenia that while its world-famous leaders, Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk, are being fêted as Nobel Prize–winning peacemakers, the country is sliding ever deeper into civil war. Carnage among blacks in Natal and in the townships outside Johannesburg has dimmed the bright hopes raised four years ago, in February of 1990, when the African National Congress was unbanned and Mandela was released from jail. Even as men in suits and ties were negotiating an enlightened, nonracial constitutional order at a conference hall in Johannesburg's white suburbs, in just six weeks last July and August more than 800 people were shot, stoned, burned, or hacked to death in townships and squatter camps south of the city. The violence casts doubt on whether the country's first universal election, scheduled for April, can possibly be free and fair. And even those not inclined to ascribe "black-on-black" violence to some mysterious inherent savagery in the African soul may observe this gradually debilitating war and wonder: For all the promising changes of the past several years, could South Africa be headed down the familiar African path of protracted war and ruin?

South Africa's system of apartheid in some ways typified Africa's most self-destructive tendency. It was tribalism codified. By "tribalism" I mean not an exotic habit of hatred but rather a method, as common elsewhere in the world, from Bosnia to Lebanon to India, as it is in Africa: a cynical means of acquiring or retaining power by exploiting or exacerbating ethnic differences. "*Khali al-abid yakul al-abid,*" goes an old Sudanese saying from the nineteenth century, when Arab slave merchants dominated southern Sudan by playing one black African tribe against another—"Let the slave eat the slave." But what does tribalism have to do with the current fighting in South Africa? And why is the fighting happening now, when the promise of an end to white rule is more real than it has ever before been?

Natal is a good place to begin asking these questions, because South Africa's civil war began there. By the time the fighting finally spread to the Transvaal townships outside Johannesburg, in 1990, it had been decimating Natal for

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about five years. Moreover, unlike the fighting in the Transvaal, where the killing has largely broken down along ethnic lines, Zulu against Xhosa, the fighting in Natal has pitted Zulu against Zulu. So the most obvious and superficial explanation for conflict—ethnicity—falls away in Natal. One must focus instead on all the myriad other elements in the picture which in the end explain tribalism's potency in much of the rest of Africa as well: the weak or corrupt institutions of law, the machinations of opportunists and their proxies, the meddling of outsiders, the fusion of politics with crime, poverty, and ignorance.

Natal's war is steeped in the violent history and self-fulfilling prophesies of apartheid. Like the former Soviet Union, South Africa in transition provides a sobering illustration of the links between tyranny and lethal anarchy. White South Africans tend to speak of "black-on-black" violence as a foreign phenomenon that has nothing to do with them; "You can't take the bush out of the African," they say. But the war in Natal has quite a lot to do with whites, and with the methods they have used to dominate blacks for more than a century.

Zulu Against Zulu

FROM the Indian Ocean port of Durban it is a three-hour drive to the desolate, windswept battlegrounds of northern Natal, where Zulus, Boers, and British waged their legendary clashes in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. An hour's drive south of Durban you reach Port Shepstone, a modest seaside town named after the nineteenth-century British Secretary for Native Affairs Theophilus Shepstone. It was Shepstone who created the clever method of "indirect rule," whose complex legacy furthers today's bloodletting in Natal. Indirect rule was a way of delegating repression by co-opting or coercing traditional chiefs, or "loyal natives," to govern their subjects on behalf of the colonial power. Indirect rule was the forerunner of the bantustan system, Hendrik Vervoerd's epic vision of divide and rule known as "separate development."

More than 3.5 million blacks were forceably removed from their homes to "self-governing" or nominally independent "bantustans," or "homelands"—surely one of history's great campaigns of "ethnic cleansing" before the term was coined. South Africa's homelands, now scheduled to be abolished under the terms of the new constitution, have endured as reservoirs of cheap migrant labor and as ethnically based centers of power for those who would wield it.

On the coastal highway to Port Shepstone, as throughout Natal, you drive from the First World in and out of the Third—through the lush green sugar estates of irrigated white South Africa, in and out of the bleak and impoverished KwaZulu bantustan, the power base of Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi and his Zulu-based Inkatha movement. Chief Buthelezi was once lionized by white South Africans and Western conservatives as a "moderate" alternative to the African National Congress. He opposed sanctions and favored free enterprise. He rose to power with the acquiescence of the ANC, and throughout the 1970s and 1980s he appealed for Mandela's release from prison. He said he opposed apartheid.

Yet Buthelezi was also fundamentally a creature of the bantustan system. He became the Chief Minister of KwaZulu in 1972 and later, importantly, Minister of Police as well. He used his position as the head of KwaZulu to build up a formidable power base.

While the ANC was banned, and its partisans jailed and often tortured for trying to organize, Inkatha was free to carry on its activities. Relying on funds provided by Pretoria and on the virtually unlimited police powers and taxing authority allowed by the system of indirect rule, Inkatha evolved into an impressive political machine with exclusive channels of patronage. In KwaZulu, Inkatha has controlled the allocation of land, health care, pensions, education, travel documents, and police officers. Inkatha has claimed a membership of more than a million, but there is no telling how much of this is the result of genuine support and how much of coercion. Buthelezi refused the nominal independence that Pretoria offered KwaZulu, but his increasingly autocratic behavior has undermined his image as a democrat. Inkatha has become less a party or a movement than a syndicate of rural Zulu chiefs and urban bosses, backed by the coercive power of the KwaZulu Police.

Now Buthelezi is struggling to hold on to power. He has allied Inkatha with the pro-apartheid Conservative Party, and the two groups have walked out of constitutional talks and threatened to boycott the elections. Inkatha has colluded with reactionary elements in the South African armed forces, police, and military intelligence who share its interest in destabilizing and discrediting the ANC. And finally, as befits a durable survivor in the land of apartheid, Buthelezi is playing the ethnic card. He has been mobilizing the mostly illiterate Zulu population much as Serbian nationalist leaders have mobilized Serbs in the former Yugoslavia: by propagating a highly romanticized version of his people's history and tradition, and by stoking their fears. Without Zulu "unity" under his leadership, Buthelezi repeatedly warns, Zulus will be subjected to "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing" at the hands of the ANC. Decrying the ANC's "campaign to annihilate the Zulu nation," Buthelezi has declared, "They want to leave us homeless so that we too will be forced to wander in the desert, as the people of Israel did after their emancipation from Egypt."

A Mini-War

ON the day they buried Jacky Ntebela, South Africa's slanting winter sun gave an incandescent glow to the rolling green cane fields of northern Natal. Jacky's "comrades" held aloft the black, green, and yellow banner of the ANC as they followed his hearse out of the mean smattering of matchbox houses and rutty dirt roads known as Gezinsila township, on the outskirts of Eshowe. The comrades shuffled in the familiar rhythmic *toyi-*

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toyi and lifted their voices in the stirring funeral dirge of the armed struggle against apartheid: "*Hamba kahle umkhonto, umkhonto we sizwe*," they sang—"Go well the spear, the spear of the nation."

The tiny rural cemetery was tucked into the bush off the side of the road, a humble collection of unkempt, weed-covered mounds and crude wooden crosses. Jacky's open grave was at the end of a row of four fresh mounds of copper-colored soil. These were the brand-new graves of men whose deaths in the previous fortnight had something to do with Jacky's violent demise. They were partisans of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The murder of one of these men, a Mr. Ngema, whose unmarked grave lay adjacent to the hole around which the dancing, chanting comrades now paid their last respects, had set in motion a chain of attacks and counterattacks in which Jacky's death was but the latest and probably not the last. "You can't tell if it was retaliation," one of the comrades advised me as the casket was lowered into the ground. "The area is a bit tense."

The events around Eshowe, a picturesque, placid-seeming rural white farming community with the smudge of Gezinsila township on its periphery, typify the mosaic of discrete mini-wars making up the wider conflict in Natal. Eleven people had been killed around Eshowe in the two weeks before Jacky Ntebela's funeral. Surrounding these murders was a confusing saga full of alleged warlords, hit squads, and police complicity—most of it impossible to confirm for lack of any lawful accountability in South Africa's shifting ground between tyranny and anarchy.

The local Inkatha warlord is a man named Gideon Zulu, a prince in the traditional Zulu royal family. Gideon Zulu is a member of the KwaZulu legislative assembly and also a member of Inkatha's central committee. He has been a feared participant in Natal's running battles at least since August of 1985, when he led a vigilante throng of *amabutho*, or Zulu warriors, in a club-wielding, spear-carrying rampage against funeralgoers from the ANC-aligned United Democratic Front (UDF) in the huge Durban township of Umlazi.

Among Gideon Zulu's former bodyguards, neighbors say, is a man named Xolani Ngema, the son of the murdered Mr. Ngema whose fresh grave is adjacent to Jacky Ntebela's. Xolani Ngema is a special constable—"*kitskonstabel*" in Afrikaans—in the KwaZulu Police. The KZP is an adjunct of the South African Police (SAP), funded by Pretoria. It is supposedly responsible for neutral law enforcement in KwaZulu; in reality it is Chief Buthelezi's personal militia. Thus does crime become combustibly blurred with politics, when the rule of law becomes identified with a partisan political interest. The commissioner of the KZP from 1989–1992 was Major-General Jacques Buchner, a veteran of South Africa's covert wars in Rhodesia, Namibia, and Mozambique who personified the collusion between Inkatha and South Africa's security forces. Buchner's claim to covert fame derived from his former role as commander of a unit of the security police in Pretoria responsible for "turning" captured guerrillas of the ANC and the Namibian nationalist group SWAPO and then training these so-called *askaris* to conduct reconnaissance missions and, allegedly, death-squad attacks. The KwaZulu Police, and the *kitskonstabels* in particular, have been implicated in innumerable crimes of commission and omission; "*kits*" means "in a moment" in Afrikaans, a reference to the minimal training they receive.

After the attack on Ngema, in which three others were also killed, his son Xolani is said to have rounded up a gang of KZP veterans and embarked on a reign of terror. They are said to have attacked the Mazmuku family first, killing three, including a seventy-nine-year-old grandmother who recently joined the ANC. Then they attacked Sipho Mthiyana—a former "*induna*," the Zulu equivalent of a ward boss—and his son, Lucky.

The attack on Mthiyana had happened in the night ten days earlier, when, Mthiyana told me, Xolani Ngema and two others had set upon him and his son with bush knives and shot him three times with a .38 caliber revolver. He was sitting now on the front porch of his plain cement-block house, with chickens darting around the dirt yard. Portly and bespectacled, Mthiyana, fifty-one, spoke with evident discomfort, his head still wrapped in gauze and three bullet wounds healing on his buttocks. Lucky, twenty-three, wearing an ANC T-shirt, sat in silence. He had hideous scars across his face and on a grossly swollen elbow. "Xolani believes the ANC killed his father," Mthiyana said. "After the violence started last year, the IFP leaders alleged that I was with the ANC. At the time, Xolani said to me, 'You didn't do anything to stop the ANC from growing.' He said, 'Next time I will kill you.'"

Mthiyana's power to stop the ANC, had he chosen to do so, derived from his position as an *induna*. According to traditional Zulu custom *indunas*, among other responsibilities, have the power to mobilize their respective warrior regiments, the *amabutho*, should the safety of their constituencies be threatened. Many *indunas*, like their chiefs, receive salaries from the KwaZulu government and are thus, by necessity, aligned with Inkatha. After the ANC was unbanned and its representatives began organizing in rural Natal for the first time, Mthiyana was instructed by his superiors in Inkatha to mobilize the *amabutho* against the ANC. "The chairperson of the IFP and the IFP youth told me to keep the ANC out," Mthiyana recalled. "They asked for my permission to use the *amabutho* to fight to keep the ANC out. I denied that authority. I was trying to avoid the violence between the ANC and Inkatha. As a result, they started saying, 'No, you are not with us; you are sympathetic to the ANC.'"

Mthiyana was soon ousted as an *induna*. "They have started to threaten people," he said. "They have hired gangsters. They go out at night to assault and shoot and burn homes, to show people this is what will happen if you join the ANC." Had he reported the attack on him to the police? "It would be useless to pursue the matter with the police," Mthiyana said. "The

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SAP cops used to say, 'The ANC must go back to Transkei.'"

This is the ethnic card. Transkei is one of the nominally independent bantustans designated for Xhosas (the other is Ciskei), who predominate in the leadership of the ANC. Nelson Mandela is Xhosa. A sinister theme running through the rhetoric of Buthelezi and his Inkatha chiefs and warlords—and of the police—is that the ANC is an agent of the Xhosas, bent on the "genocide" of the Zulus. Zulus who support the ANC, by many accounts a majority among South Africa's 8.5 million Zulus, are branded "*amaXhosa*" (literally, "Xhosas"), betrayers of their Zulu brethren. "I am living in fear," Mthiyana said. "I am not sleeping in my house. My family sleeps in the Methodist church. No one sleeps here anymore."

Survival Is the Issue

As many as 15,000 black South Africans have died in internecine political violence among blacks since 1985. In Natal alone nearly 2,000 were killed last year, a figure well above a decade-long average of about a hundred a month, three or four a day. At least as many people have been wounded, by everything from bush knives and spears to hand grenades and automatic gunfire. More than 100,000 have been driven from their homes.

The ANC's war with Inkatha began in Natal during the township uprising of the mid-1980s, when the comrades' campaign to render the townships "ungovernable" evolved into an often violent effort to destroy the structures of the state and its clients, including the police, suspected informers, township councillors seen as puppets of Pretoria, and rural bantustan officials. To this day ANC partisans regard their war against Inkatha as but the latest chapter in the long struggle to destroy apartheid and all its agents, black and white.

"The killings relate to the struggle for liberation in this country," says Harry Gwala, the militant patriarch of the ANC in Natal, who by all accounts speaks a language his constituents understand far better than the more moderate appeals of the ANC's national leadership. "The background to the violence is the intensification of the struggle against apartheid. It is a war of liberation." The perception of Inkatha as an ally or agent of the state has only been reinforced by the well-documented collusion of Inkatha with elements from within the South African police, army, and intelligence forces. Whether Inkatha's partisans are in fact stooges or collaborators, or merely themselves victims of apartheid, when they were attacked, necklaced, or driven from their homes by arsonists their survival interests coincided with those of the state and its security forces. They fought back, sometimes in league with the police, sometimes by mobilizing mobs of vigilantes who gave as good as they got—and often much more.

But if the conflict pits the forces of change against forces with a stake in the status quo, not all those fighting for change are notably enlightened, and not all those who have found themselves defending the status quo are sinister. Most of the latter are cannon fodder, duped or press-ganged into fighting for interests they are now bound to defend for their own survival. All manner of gangsters and opportunists have jumped into the fray, on both sides, and the methods they employ have long since brought out the worst in each other.

Quite apart from the politics of ethnicity and the covert role of elements of the security forces in furthering the conflict, another engine propelling the cycle of violence is anarchy: the all but complete absence of legitimate law enforcement, a problem inherent in the absence of legitimate government. The ANC sees the police as the enemy, and vice versa. Anarchy is compelling many people to seek allegiance with political parties for refuge, vengeance, or both.

"You're talking about a high-crime situation," says a police official who believes that incompetent and indifferent police forces are the primary cause of the violence. "You're looking at people who are looking for justice. They turn to political parties, or to an armed wing, or to returned political exiles who can achieve justice for them. Political parties have become justice organizations for millions of people because there is a big vacuum that the police are either unable or unwilling to fill."

The failure of the police derives from a number of factors. Apart from the partisanship of many police officers, to whom the ANC has always been a murderous and—until four years ago—illegal organization, there is outright racism among many white and Indian officers, who imagine that blacks killing blacks is the natural order of things. There is also severe understaffing and pervasive incompetence in investigative work. Under South Africa's draconian security laws and extended states of emergency, the police have never had a legal incentive to develop evidence beyond what could be beaten out of a suspect with no lawyer, no right to remain silent, and no limit on how long he could be detained without charges.

And there is the problem of finding witnesses. "It's all very well for people in the townships to complain about the absence of law enforcement, but you can't get anyone to give evidence," says Justice John Didcott, a respected member of the South African Supreme Court in Natal. "People are understandably afraid to testify. Many fear that people who are in trouble will come back and not only kill you but kill your family as well. It has a snowball effect. People are likely to be acquitted because witnesses are afraid to give evidence against them, and people are reluctant to give evidence because they believe people are likely to be acquitted. It's important for the police to provide protection for witnesses, but police protection might put you in even greater danger, because people would suspect you are an informer."

Not a few people take the law into their own hands. James Zulu, a high school teacher and an Inkatha activist in the violence-wracked Port Shepstone area, says that an ANC gang ambushed his home with hand grenades and bush knives in September of 1991,

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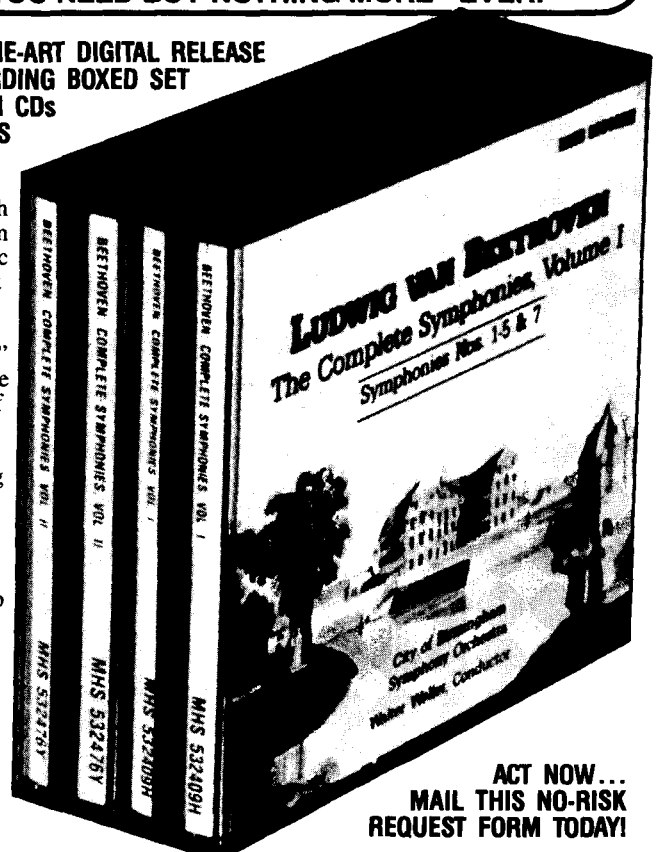

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killing his mother, his brother, and his two small children. Several men were arrested, Zulu told me, but they were released and the charges were dropped. So Zulu tracked down the leader of the group and shot him to death. Then he went to the police and confessed. "It was self-defense," Zulu explained. "This man was looking for me. He said he wanted to kill me. I cannot say that is the best way of solving the problem, but I had no choice. I was just between the devil and the deep blue sea. I had to take the first chance." Zulu was convicted and received a five-year suspended sentence. "I've got no hope of killing a person in the future," he said. "It's not in my nature."

"Necklacing" and Its Consequences

THERE is no question that the conduct of many comrades, dating back to the era of "necklacing" and "people's courts" in the township uprising of the mid-eighties, has driven many people into the arms of Inkatha. Senzo Mafayela, Inkatha's chief organizer in the Durban area, describes the mid-eighties as "the most troubled time in my life." He says, "I did not agree with how the UDF were running things. I didn't mind people going into the streets, but when people were being intimidated, stoning transport, burning houses, making threats that interfered with my life, you had to participate. If you didn't, you were the enemy. You were a stooge. You were a sellout." Mafayela blames the state for failing to protect its supposed allies in the townships. "The lack of proper state response to the UDF anger created a massive countermobilization by the IFP. That countermobilization was very violent."

Justice Richard Goldstone, who chairs a judicial commission investigating the causes of the violence, declared in a widely quoted press release in May of 1992, "The primary cause of the violence in all of these areas is the political battle between supporters of the African National Congress and of the Inkatha Freedom Party. Both sides resort to violence and intimidation in their attempts to gain control over geographic areas." Less widely reported were the details behind that broad judgment. Goldstone clarified his conclusion in an interview in Johannesburg. "The political rivalry is the trigger, not the cause. It's the last of a series of causes that go back a century. You have a century of racial discrimination, of dehumanizing the victims to justify discrimination. You have forty-five years of apartheid, including the repression of black political representation. You have the use of the South African police and security forces for repressive purposes. You have tremendous unemployment, poor education, discriminatory education. You have a huge number of unemployed youths. If you add all of these things up, it would be strange if this were not a violent society."

Political killings account for only a small fraction of the violence in South Africa. By some estimates, purely criminal murders outnumber politically motivated murders by five to one. South Africa's murder rate has doubled in the past four years and is now reckoned to be ten times that of the United States. Unemployment now surpasses 40 percent among black South Africans, reaching 90 percent or more among the so-called lost generation of black youths in some areas, whose militancy in the 1980s township uprising —their slogan was "Liberation now, education later"—scarcely equipped them to compete in an economy that has been shrinking for much of the past decade. The failing economy has driven hundreds of thousands from the rural homelands into crowded shantytowns in a largely futile search for jobs. These slums have all the social pathologies of urban slums and shantytowns the world over: acute housing shortages, lack of schools and transport, the breakdown of families and other traditional sources of authority. Organized crime flourishes, with "shacklords" running protection and gambling rackets and trafficking in drugs, prostitution, and, above all, guns. High-powered firearms are pouring into the country, primarily from Mozambique; an AK-47 can be bought in the townships for about fifty dollars.

Justice Goldstone provided an example of the blending of crime and politics in a report of his commission's findings regarding a criminal gang known as the Black Cats, which terrorized Wesselton township, outside Ermelo, just north of Natal. The commission was unable to substantiate the claims of two Black Cats that the gang had been trained as a hit squad by military intelligence. But it found that the Black Cats were eventually recruited as members by Inkatha, apparently to establish an Inkatha presence in that area. The commission reported,

> For some time Wesselton . . . had been the scene of violent confrontation between a number of criminal gangs. . . . The position was exacerbated by the gangs attracting the attention of political organisations which used them in order to enlarge their political support and power. All of these factors combined and led to violence and ruthless murder.

The Engine of Anarchy

THERE may be no more vivid illustration of anarchy as an engine propelling political conflict than the squatter settlement known as Bambayi, home to about 20,000 mostly unemployed blacks, on the edge of KwaMashu township, outside Durban. Bambayi is a sprawling, squalid warren of plywood shanties and mud-walled hovels that has been growing and festering like a sore on the side of KwaMashu since the 1970s. "Bambayi" is a popular corruption of "Bombay"; the settlement used to be an Indian group area called Phoenix, before the Indians were driven out by black rioters in 1985.

More than a hundred people had been killed in Bambayi in the six months before my visit, in a kaleidoscopic saga of "reds" against "greens." The conflict apparently began as a turf battle among marijuana smugglers. It expanded to include slum warlords and witch doctors,

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then Inkatha and the ANC, and finally, reportedly, a predominantly Indian division of the South African Police known as the Internal Stability Unit (ISU). What started out as a dispute between criminal factions uniformly loyal to the ANC in an ANC-dominated settlement took on a political cast, residents say, when one of the factions, the greens, was wooed (and armed) by Inkatha partisans who had previously been expelled from the squatter camp and were seeking to make inroads again. Inkatha, in turn, allegedly received willing support (and guns) from Indian officers in the ISU who were said to be nursing a grudge against the ANC for the pillaging of Indian property which its partisans had done a decade earlier. What makes the cut and thrust of the conflict all the more confusing is that many of the greens now battling the ANC on behalf of Inkatha are Xhosas, migrants from Transkei whose search for work in the Durban area has been no more successful than that of their Zulu adversaries.

Thus does opportunism born of desperation ride on the back of politics and vice versa. Nearly everyone I spoke with in Bambayi was unemployed. Nothing anyone told me could be independently verified. No one could recall a single arrest. Each side blamed the other, and neither side acknowledged any truth in the other side's version of events.

Among those killed in the weeks before my visit was eighteen-year-old Thokoani Ntshantsha, unemployed, who was shot on May 15 while fighting against the greens. His sister, Sundisiwe, twenty-four and pregnant, said that her brother was killed by the ISU while fighting under the banner of the ANC. "If you are male, you have to take part in defending the community," Sundisiwe said. "It's just a situation whereby when there is fighting, you just take what you can and go to the battlefield. If it's a spear, you take a spear." She said she had not reported the matter to the police, "because there are no results on the reported cases." What was the fighting all about? "I don't know—I know nothing." What will she tell her new child? "I will say that the community I was staying in wasn't seeing eye to eye." Does she support the ANC? "If our community requires us to be members of the ANC, we will become members of the ANC." How about Inkatha? "If the community sees it right, it can be so."

A SINISTER THEME RUNNING THROUGH THE RHETORIC OF BUTHELEZI AND HIS INKATHA CHIEFS AND WARLORDS—AND OF THE POLICE—IS THAT THE ANC IS AN AGENT OF THE XHOSAS, BENT ON THE "GENOCIDE" OF THE ZULUS.

Shepstone's Indirect Rule

ZULUS in the ANC are quick to remind a visitor that Zulu chiefs were among the founders of the ANC. The president of the ANC before it was banned, in 1960, was Albert Luthuli, a Zulu chief who won the Nobel Peace Prize. The ANC's problem with chiefs is not with their role in traditional structures but with the marriage of those structures with the structures of apartheid.

Theophilus Shepstone's system of indirect rule was the method of control that Britain would later apply throughout its colonies in tropical Africa. Under indirect rule chiefs were placed on the government payroll and subordinated to the colonial governor. Shepstone recognized some traditional chiefs and appointed others. The chiefs, in turn, continued to exercise absolute authority over their subjects, though they were responsible, in the last resort, not to their own people but to the colonial government. Shepstone's genius was in persuading Africans that they were governing themselves. Through a succession of acts and amendments over the next century indirect rule grafted state structures onto the traditional system, in the process creating a bureaucratized chieftainship with unaccountable power. When the homelands were created, chiefs became powerful employees of homeland governments. Since in KwaZulu most chiefs are members of Inkatha, they are instruments of Inkatha's power.

To be sure, KwaZulu's chiefs are a mixed lot. Many have served their subjects as best they could under the circumstances.

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Whether they are puppets, collaborators, agents, dupes, opportunists, or well-meaning victims of apartheid can be a difficult call amid the tangle of bribery and coercion. The complexity of their position was brought home to me in a conversation in Umgababa, a semi-rural KwaZulu township south of Durban, where two senior advisers of an embattled Inkatha chief, Philbert Luthuli, waxed nostalgic for the good old days of Hendrik Verwoerd and Jan Smuts. John Luthuli, seventy-one years old, the chief's uncle, perhaps noticing my dropped jaw, explained, "They were using the law, and a person grew up knowing himself quite well. He knew that he didn't have to do something bad because he is going to go to jail." But Hendrik Verwoerd was the architect of apartheid, was he not? "I support apartheid," Luthuli replied. "It makes you have an identity. You knew that you are an African, and an Indian is an Indian, and a white man is a white man. People have lost their identity now."

Albert Mchunu, seventy-three, the chief's white-bearded "counselor," added, "The whites were making us clever by treating us like that. We have planted sugar because of such things." Luthuli continued, "We won't survive without that presence of the whites. We are like animals." I must have looked startled. "I'm not saying this to bribe you because you are white," Luthuli assured me. "I'm saying this because of what I've seen of black people killing each other."

Mchunu brought up the by-now familiar ethnic issue: "Since Transkei and Ciskei have their own governments, they must remain like this. It is [the Xhosas] who are causing the conflicts here. They must remain in their areas and don't interfere with what is happening here." That sounded like an argument for apartheid, I noted. "Yes, we are fighting to maintain apartheid," Mchunu replied. "We don't want the whites to go away from here. We fought the Boers. We fought the British. And then we were living in peace. It is the ANC which is causing this war."

"Listen, Boy"

LUTHULI'S attitude was an extreme example of abasement, perhaps, but not uncommon, I was told, among older, mostly illiterate peasants in rural Natal, to whom a word like "collaboration" probably applies less than does "adaptation" or "accommodation" to a harsh life of subservience. Minutes away from the chief's kraal, across the road and in the ANC's turf, one of the comrades, Thomas Mdluli, denounced the chief and his allies. "Those people are believing in the bantustan, in the apartheid system," he declared. Mdluli, twenty-seven, a life-raft repairman, is the ANC's branch organizer in Umgababa and the local chairman of the South African Communist Party. Sitting in his cramped bedroom, bearded and bespectacled, wearing a red Communist Party T-shirt and a black leather jacket, Mdluli looked every bit the militant as he described a long succession of what he said were indiscriminate SAP-backed attacks on his area.

But his tone softened when he spoke of his parents, still living on Chief Luthuli's side of the road. "On the other side of the road are the parents only, the poor people like my mommy and pappy. They are controlled by the IFP, because the old people know how to tolerate the apartheid system. They think, 'While I'm here, to keep peace I will stay here and accept what is happening.' Like my father—he said, 'On that side we listen to one man.' My dad is not educated. He has Standard 3. My mom was Standard 2, because at that time they were not permitted to go to school. I'm talking about what I have experienced in my own family. My mommy, she's a domestic worker. She works under a white man, a member of the National Party. She used to support that organization. She used to say, 'Listen, boy.' My mommy's boss used to drive me to school for seven years. She used to say, 'Because they were good to me, I support their party.'"

Inevitably, more than a few chiefs and their *indunas* over the years have operated like bosses and capos with their own little mafias. In the KwaZulu precincts around Port Shepstone more than 135 people were killed and scores of homes were torched in four months of bloodletting that began with a popular revolt against an *induna* accused of extorting "taxes" from his impoverished constituents while failing to account for where the money was going. The *induna*'s chief was later charged with eleven counts of murder. "The whole thrust of apartheid was to decide what was good for the filthy black people," Moses Anafu, a Ghanaian diplomat who has worked with a team from the British Commonwealth to broker peace in the area, told me. "What was good for them in the eyes of the fathers of apartheid was to go back to the traditional ways of living, to artificially preserve practices and traditions, such as the *amabutho* system, which would have gone out with modernity. Many of the chiefs are uneducated. They are illiterate. This helps explain why chiefs have not been an enlightened force."

In recent years a group of dissident chiefs has formed with the aim of abolishing apartheid and its bantustan system. The Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA) has inevitably gravitated toward the ANC and the UDF; Buthelezi has denounced CONTRALESA as a "spear [in] the heart of Zulu unity." CONTRALESA's first president, Chief Mhlabunzima Joseph Maphumulo, was assassinated in February of 1991. The crime was never solved, but evidence pointed to agents of the South African Police. Earlier, in 1988, a close ally of Maphumulo, Chief Msinga Mlaba, was assassinated. That crime, too, remains unsolved, though Mlaba's younger brother and successor as chief, Zibuse Mlaba, who is now CONTRALESA's secretary for Natal, says he has "information" that the murder was the work of an Inkatha hit squad.

Chief Zibuse Mlaba, thirty-eight, gave me a firsthand account of the covert pressures brought to bear on rural chiefs by security-force agents in collusion with Inkatha. After he became chief, he said, he was approached by a captain in the South African Police who promised to give him weapons if he would join Inkatha's chiefs and fight

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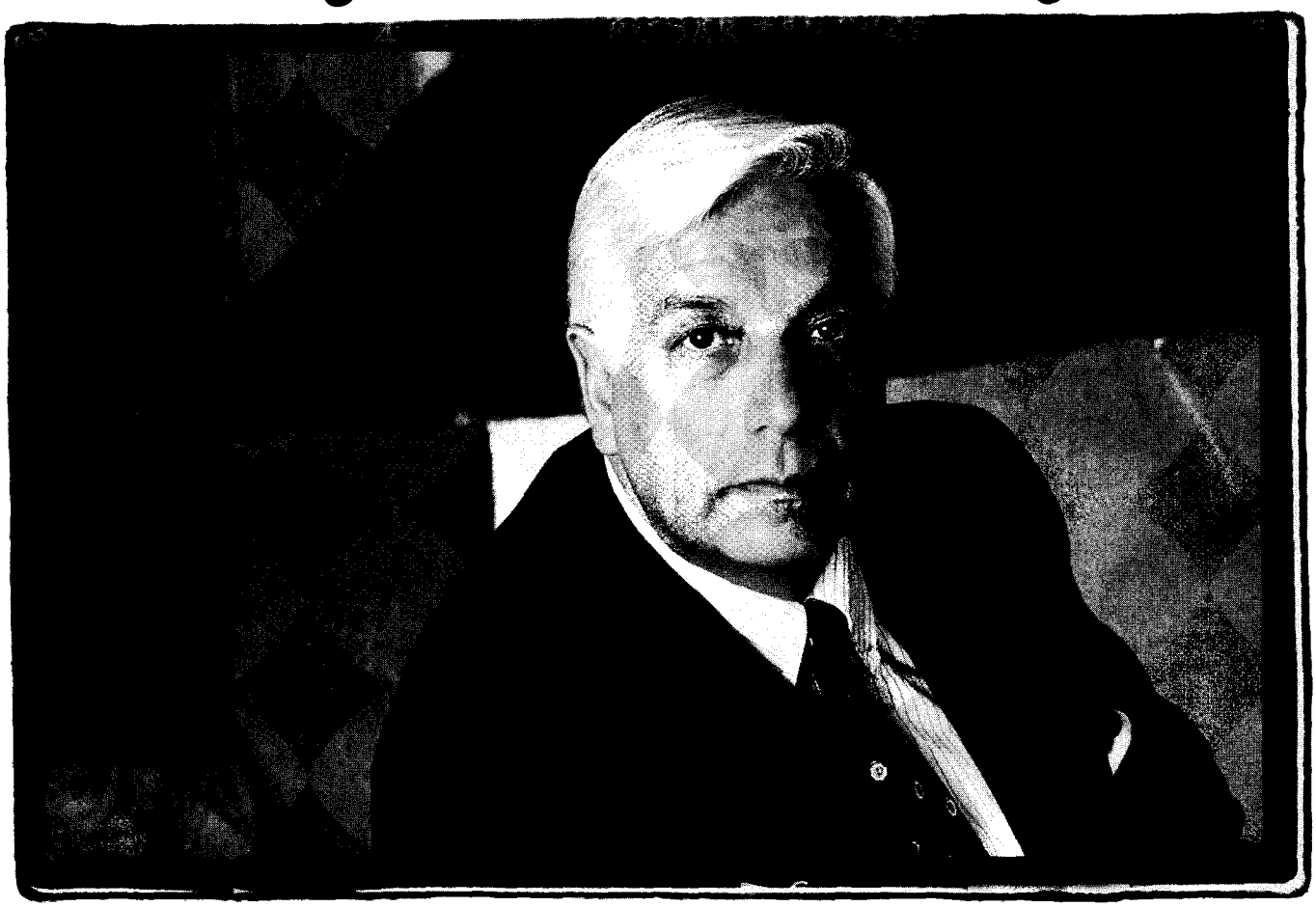

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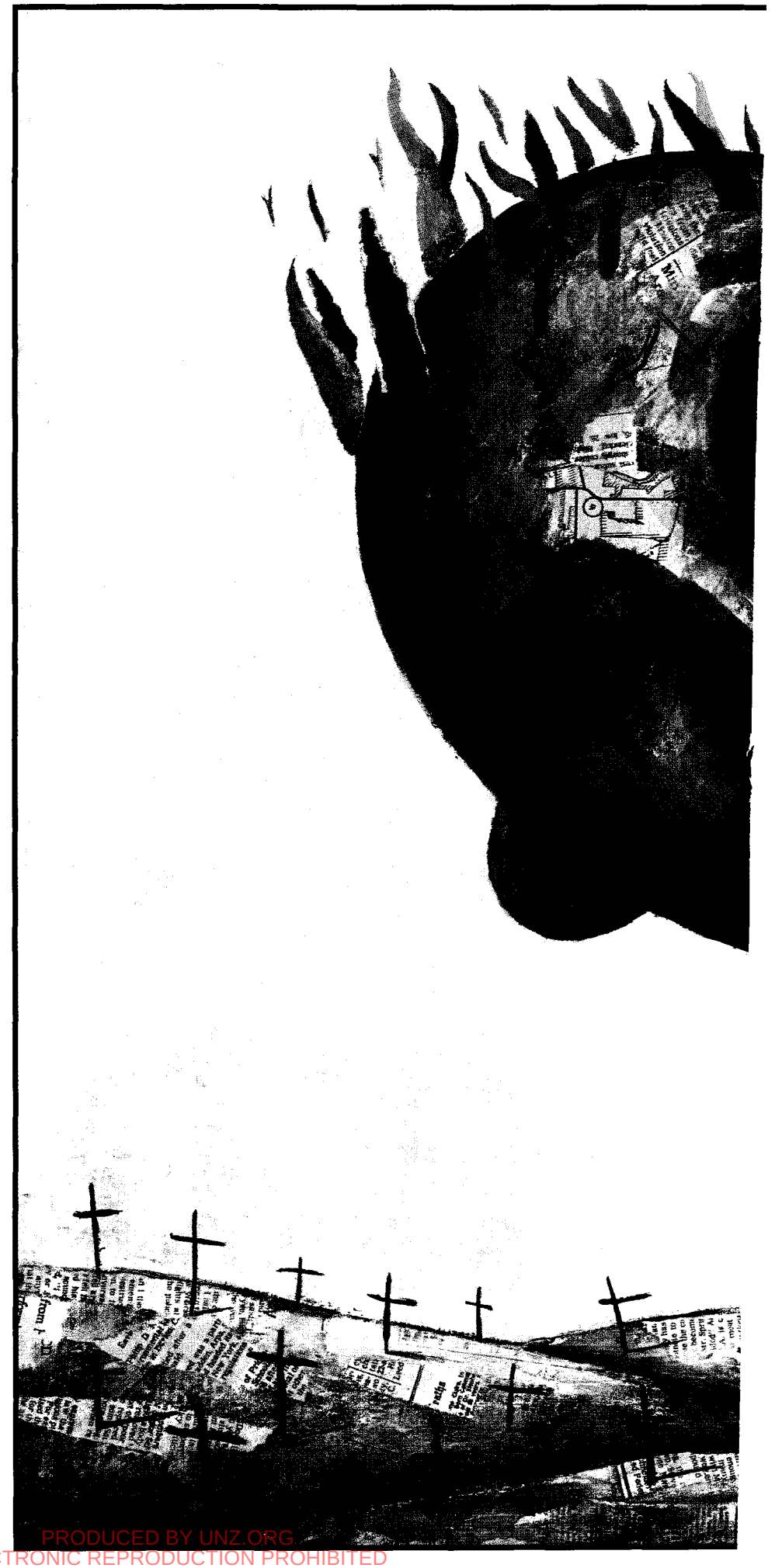
the United Democratic Front. "They didn't know I was with the UDF," Mlaba told me. "They were trying to project me against my own people to get rid of the UDF comrades. They offered me any help I needed." He was given a pistol and a shotgun. The chief reached in his pocket and pulled out three gun licenses issued by SAP, and drew back his windbreaker to reveal a pistol, which he said he had accepted to protect his wife and children. "They said I would no longer have control over my own people if I allowed the UDF to be active in my area. They said, 'You are going to be ruled by foreigners.' They said the only solution was to join the other chiefs in Inkatha and fight the UDF." Few chiefs have resisted these entreaties, Mlaba said. "When you refuse, they threaten you. Some joined in because they feared for their lives."

When Chief Mlaba refused to send his *amabutho* to an Inkatha "prayer rally" in 1989, buses filled with warriors and vans filled with SAP men descended on his area. "They were shouting at us that we have allowed the Xhosas to invade the Zulus' land," Mlaba recalled. When his own youthful followers counterattacked, "the police vanished so we could kill each other."

Terror and Patronage

NATAL'S warlords have been compared to fourteenth-century Italian signori and twentieth-century Chinese and Lebanese warlords, Colombian drug lords, and Mafia racketeers. Like all of these, Natal's warlords control fiefdoms through a mixture of terror and patronage. In their own fiefs they can tax and recruit, run protection rackets, hire hit men, and finance private militias by extorting tribute from their subjects, whether those are peasants or squatters. The warlords exploit the corruption inherent in unaccountable tribal rule. The old Shepstonian system was designed to make the administration of Africans pay for itself by permitting chiefs to rule over their own tribesmen and collect taxes from them. *Indunas* were the collection



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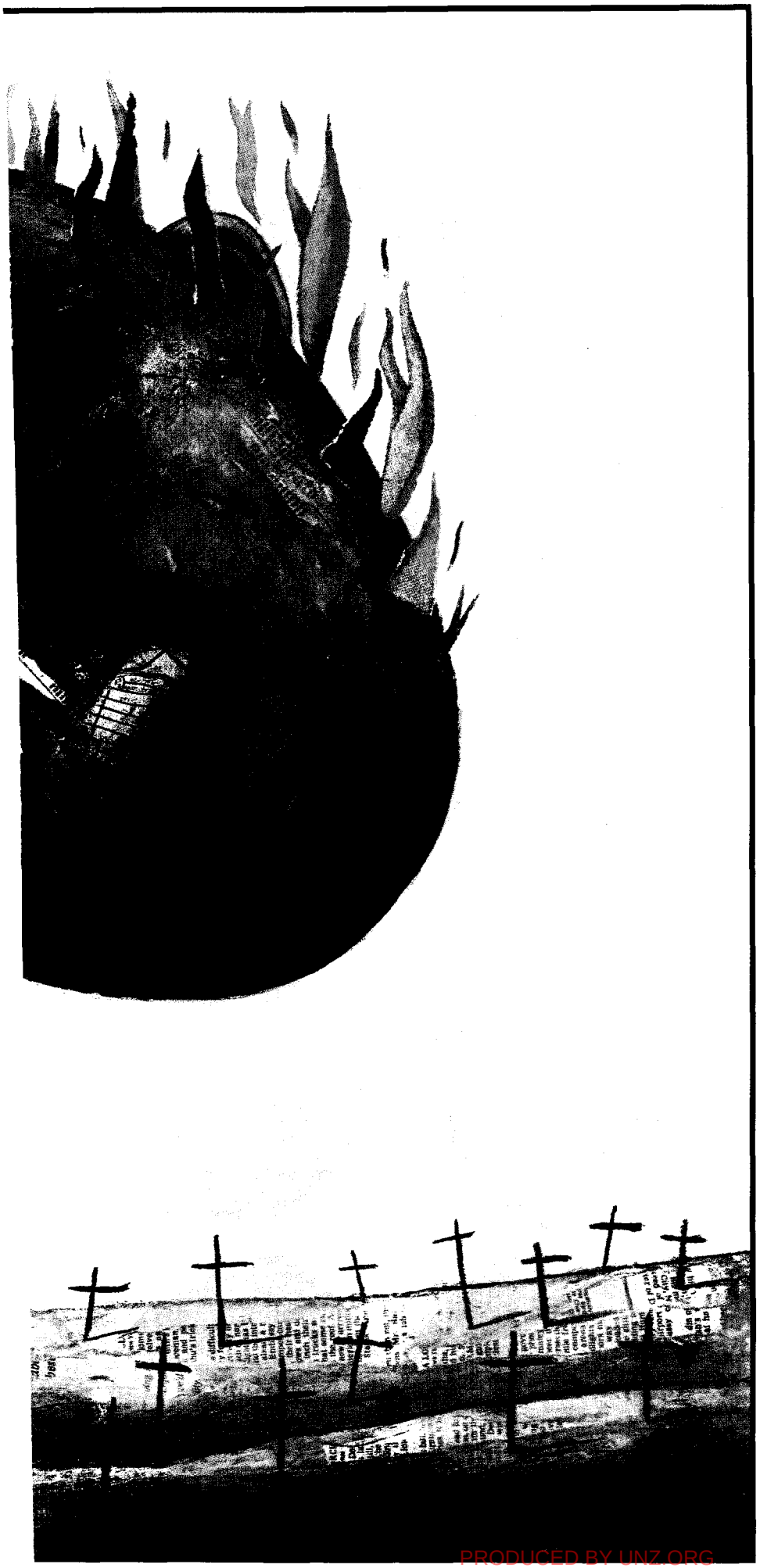

agents, and more than a few emerged as warlords. Likewise, urban councillors, local Inkatha chairmen, and members of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly monopolized the structures of power and patronage in their areas.

In the vast squatter settlements that have mushroomed outside Durban over the past decade, urban shacklords have moved into the vacuum of law and accountable power. They organize vigilantes to curb crime—or perpetrate it—and pay them by creating an informal tax base from "rents," or household levies. By the mid-1980s, with the lifting of influx control, greater Durban was one of the fastest-urbanizing areas of the world; the squatting problem was second only to that of Mexico City. Refugees from rural poverty flooded into Durban at a rate of 100,000 a year. By 1985 the number of people living in squalid, anarchic shantytowns on the outskirts of Durban had reached a million.

The proliferation of warlords in Natal can also be traced to the political unrest that swept the townships and rural areas in the 1980s, and to the use of vigilantes by various groups, primarily Inkatha, in reaction to the unrest. Warlords who first emerged as gangsters, or who served a vigilante function against crime, or both, were inevitably drawn into the political struggle. Certainly the ANC has produced—or ridden on the backs of—many township toughs with tax bases of their own: "If you want us to defend you, you must pay us so that we can buy bullets," the comrades say. The romantic struggle against apartheid has long been exploited by criminal elements who, in the name of the struggle, have looted, extorted, and murdered for personal gain. These are the *comtsotsis*—unemployed, illiterate gangsters who flourished when tens of thousands of UDF activists were detained during the mid-eighties uprising. Amorphously organized self-defense units, unemployed veterans of Umkhonto we Sizwe (the ANC's armed guerrilla wing, popularly known as MK), and common criminals alike—all heavily armed—have fought in the name of the struggle. Lines of authority are blurred; legal accountability for abuses is nil.

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ANC partisans take some comfort in pointing out that the ANC's violence is generated primarily at its fringes, whereas Inkatha's violence flows from the center outward. But the ANC's leadership in Natal, if not directly linked to specific acts of violence, has not worked to prevent violence. Quite the contrary. "We will not meet them with Bibles in our hands," Harry Gwala, the ANC's militant midlands leader, told me when we discussed Inkatha. "If they come with fire, we will quash them fire with fire. Even Shakespeare said that 'as fire drives out fire, so pity pity.'"

The most notorious of Natal's warlords are aligned with Inkatha, and many have murky links with the security forces. Chief among them are David Ntombela, an *induna* who has been involved in nearly all the bitter struggles that have wracked the Natal midlands around Pietermaritzburg, and Thomas Shabalala, the self-proclaimed Inkatha mayor of Lindelani, a huge squatter settlement on the outskirts of KwaMashu township, outside Durban.

Thomas Shabalala is a tall, cocky, gregarious man with a high, balding forehead and ritual scars on his face. He was dressed in a stylish Italian suit and a paisley tie when I met him at his barebones office in a ramshackle compound in Lindelani. Uniformed KwaZulu policemen guarded the compound. A government-issue rifle was propped against the wall behind his desk. "The ANC cannot come into my area," Shabalala declared, though he denied that intimidation was a factor. "Blue lies," he scoffed, when I asked about the widespread reports of his strong-arm tactics. "There's unity in this area. There's no such thing as intimidation."

Shabalala is the foremost Inkatha warlord in the greater Durban area. He emerged as a spokesman for the squatters of Lindelani in the mid-1980s, became chairman of the local Inkatha branch, and later became a member of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. Eventually he joined Inkatha's central committee—though he was expelled after his exploits became too controversial. He has twice been charged with murder but not convicted; in one of these cases two of his bodyguards were found guilty of murdering seven KwaMashu Youth League members, whose bodies were found dumped on the side of a road in the township. Shabalala is regarded as one of the prime organizers of vigilante violence in and around Durban's townships since the mid-eighties. His private militias are said to have extensive criminal links; some of the members of his first vigilante force were allegedly members of a notorious prison gang known as the "26ers." The taxes that Shabalala informally exacts are pure extortion: household levies, water charges, guard duties, Inkatha membership dues, or fees for "mobilization actions." Residents of Lindelani claim that they have to pay twenty rand (about $6) a month for "living under the protection" of Shabalala's private army. Nonpayment is punishable by beatings, expulsion from the shantytown, and the destruction of one's dwelling—or assassination.

What is the fighting all about? "There's going to be an election very soon," Shabalala explained to me.

THE WORD

We ride up softly to the hidden
oval in the woods, a plateau rimmed
with wavy stands of gray birch and white pine,
my horse thinking his thoughts, happy
in the October dapple, and I thinking
mine-and-his, which is my prerogative,

both of us just in time to see a big doe
loft up over the four-foot fence, her white scut
catching the sun and then releasing it,
soundlessly clapping our reveries shut.
The pine grove shivers as she passes.
The red squirrels thrill, announcing her departure.

Come back! I want to call to her,
we mean you no harm. Come back and show us
who stand pinned in stopped time to the track
how you can go from a standing start
up and over. We on our side, pulses racing,
are synchronized with your racing heart.

I want to tell her, Watch me
mornings when I fill the cylinders
with sunflower seeds, see how the chickadees
and lesser redbreasted nuthatches crowd
onto my arm, permitting me briefly
to stand in for a tree,

and how the vixen in the bottom meadow
I ride across allows me under cover
of horse scent to observe the education
of her kits, how they dive for the burrow
on command, how they re-emerge at another
word she uses, a word I am searching for.

—MAXINE KUMIN

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NATAL'S WARLORDS CONTROL FIEFDOMS THROUGH A MIXTURE OF TERROR AND PATRONAGE. IN THEIR OWN FIEFS THEY CAN TAX AND RECRUIT, RUN PROTECTION RACKETS, HIRE HIT MEN, AND FINANCE PRIVATE MILITIAS.

"Some people are power-hungry. [The ANC] have been telling the world that they are a government in waiting. They are intimidating people. People have been necklaced. People are being killed by AK-47s." What about the well-documented history of his own vigilante attacks around Durban? Shabalala has led busloads of *amabutho* into battle against the UDF and the ANC. "Blue lies," Shabalala said again. "At that time proprietors were being attacked. Then the people got together. If people gather together to defend their schools and shops, it cannot be called vigilantes. People got together to protect their property from thugs." He shrugged. "The word 'warlord' is just a nickname. I have a gun for my protection just like any other South African. The ANC wants to kill me. I am number one on their hit list."

If Shabalala is not No. 1, David Ntombela surely is. David Ntombela is the archetype of the rural Inkatha warlord, an *induna* who emerged as a dominant figure in the Pietermaritzburg region in the late 1980s. He became notorious for leading *amabutho* into battle against UDF strongholds, most memorably in the "Seven-Days War" in the Edendale Valley, in March of 1990, in which more than a hundred died. Ntombela's reputation as a strongman was secured on Christmas Day of 1984, when in front of many witnesses he shot and killed his own brother after an argument. He has been implicated in at least eight murders, including those of a woman and her eleven-year-old daughter in 1987, but he has yet to be convicted of any of them—apparently because witnesses have been loath to come forward. Ntombela is considered to be closely allied with the security forces; he allegedly participated in the planning of the Trust Feed massacre, which led to the first judicial confirmation of collusion between high-ranking Inkatha officials and the South African Police. He is a member of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly and of Inkatha's central committee. He recently became Inkatha's regional chairman for the Natal midlands.

Ntombela is a coarse, high-strung man with peppery gray hair and wary, milky eyes. He is missing a couple of front teeth. He is given to pounding on his desk to make his points, which are delivered in a high-pitched smoker's voice. I met Ntombela on his sixty-seventh birthday in a bare-walled office at Inkatha's headquarters in Pietermaritzberg. Two plainclothes bodyguards, who said they were KwaZulu policemen, guarded the door. A pile of government-issue firearms lay on the floor in the corner. Ntombela wore a windbreaker indoors to conceal what he conceded with a smile was his ever-present pistol. He went through most of a pack of Rothmans over the course of an hour-long interview.

"I Don't Run Away"

"THEY say Ntombela is warlord number one just to damage my dignity and my leadership," Ntombela asserted. "In fact, sir, I am a strong man. No one will push me. My strategy is, I don't shoot first but I don't run away." So what is the conflict all about? "The peace-loving people were against what the UDF was doing," he explained. "They demanded to join Inkatha, because Inkatha was against what was going on with the UDF. If you ask anyone, Who started burning people alive? they will tell you it was the ANC and the UDF. They forced people not to go to work, attacked people's houses, burned their cars. They want to get freedom out of violence, while Inkatha is totally against violence. But every time the ANC would attack, Inkatha would defend themselves."

Though Ntombela heatedly disputed the charge that Inkatha was a proxy of Pretoria—"No one who's got a brain can support apartheid. We all reject apartheid"—he embarked on a long soliloquy that sounded as if it could have been written by apartheid's visionaries: "Two years back, pamphlets were dis-

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tributed in Transvaal by the ANC that said 'Kill the Zulus.' A lot of Zulus were killed in Transvaal because Zulus believe they have got their own government. Xhosas have their own government, which is Transkei. They've got their own government, which is Ciskei. Now people have been learning that history. The ANC, they've got one Zulu, which is Jacob Zuma. The rest are Xhosas." (Jacob Zuma is the lone Zulu on the ANC's national executive committee. Zuma used to be the chief of intelligence for the organization in exile. When I spoke with him later, in Johannesburg, Zuma dismissed the supposedly ANC pamphlets as obvious police forgeries in the time-honored tradition of divide and rule.)

The apocalyptic rhetoric of the warlords, endlessly repeated, has long since been absorbed by the largely illiterate rural men who are doing most of the fighting and dying in Inkatha's name. I spent an evening in a hostel on the edge of KwaMashu township. The men who live in this monument to apartheid's migrant-labor system are *amabutho* who have been engaged in bloody clashes with the comrades who control most of the rest of KwaMashu. They took me on a sobering tour of their grim, crowded, dehumanizing living quarters. "Bad, bad, bad," one of them whispered as he showed me the cramped, cell-like room he has shared with three other men since 1964. Spears leaned against one wall. "We oppose apartheid," a man with a white beard said. "Zulus, Xhosas, all suffered the same under apartheid." Everyone nodded in agreement.

A man with a scar on his jaw from a bullet wound said, "The ANC campaign seems to be directed at the Zuluman. That makes us fear that if the ANC takes power, the Zulus would have no land and no place to stay." A man in a leather jacket spoke up: "There is a serious problem. We have the Umkhonto we Sizwe and the [South African Defense Force]. They will be joined. That will create serious problems." All the men were murmuring their assent. The man went on, "MK has been trained to kill the ANC's political enemies. So we fear that if MK is joined with the army, then the Inkatha leadership will be eliminated." Everyone vigorously agreed. Did they fear for their own lives under an ANC-led government? Everyone nodded.

A Race War by Proxy

NATAL'S war pits Zulu against Zulu, yet each side demonizes the other by projecting the malevolent image of another tribe onto its Zulu brothers. Zulus aligned with Inkatha are agents of the white man; Zulus aligned with the ANC are agents of the Xhosas. It is a kind of race war by inverted proxy—a measure of apartheid's sinister resilience. There is some truth to Harry Gwala's view that Inkatha is doing the dirty work of apartheid, even if most of those who are fighting and dying in Inkatha's name are merely cannon fodder. A deeper danger confronting South Africa is that Inkatha's cynical rhetoric about Xhosa "genocide" of Zulus may also come to be true.

When Inkatha expanded its recruitment into the townships outside Johannesburg, in 1990, it did so through the traditional networks that bound Zulu men living in the migrant workers' hostels. This time the ANC partisans with whom Inkatha clashed were in fact predominantly Xhosas. In the escalating bloodshed ever since, Inkatha partisans in the hostels have increasingly been targeted as Zulus, and Zulus generally have been attacked as presumed supporters of Inkatha. In part because of the conduct to which they have been driven by Inkatha, many Zulus in the Transvaal now legitimately fear for their survival.

The circular quality of this phenomenon was brought home to me in the northern coastal district called Mpukanyoni, still regarded as a rock-solid Inkatha stronghold. "Inkatha controls this area," I was told by a man who insisted he not be identified. "No other organization is permitted to organize. The chief and the *induna* . . . impose threats on people who are seeming to be ANC followers. They say such people should leave the KwaZulu area and go to the Xhosa area, because if they are true Zulus, they will not go with the ANC. If you question them, they say, 'You are the follower of another party; that's why you ask such questions.'"

Nevertheless, there is underground support for the ANC, the man said, and Inkatha has moved to quash it. A few weeks before my visit to Mpukanyoni, he said, a gang of hostel dwellers from the Transvaal had returned home for a holiday and murdered a sugarcane farmer suspected of organizing for the ANC. "They have witnessed killings in Johannesburg," the man said of the gang. "Their friends have been killed. They said they have been killed by *amaXhosa*. They don't want what has happened in Johannesburg to happen here, so they will kill the *amaXhosa*." Why is this happening?, I asked. "It's because they know nothing. These people who are killing each other, they don't understand politics. They are misled by their leaders."

In the even more remote rural district of Nqutu, which is out along the same bleak stretch of northern Natal where the Zulus clashed with the Boers and the British at Blood River and Isandhlwana, Chief Elphas Molefe, who was dismissed from the KwaZulu government for his involvement with CONTRALESA, told me he has feared for his life since three of his associates were killed by an unidentified hit squad. "I know there is dislike between the Xhosas and the Zulus," he told me. "But now that dislike has been manipulated by the leaders and put in a political context, to the point where Zulus and Xhosas are killing each other. The reason this has been exacerbated is so that the ANC won't get leadership positions." In November, Chief Molefe was wounded in an ambush in which eleven people, including one of his sons, were killed.

The Nkomo Option

CHIEF Buthelezi seemed a long way from these murderous doings when I heard him deliver a speech to a mostly white audience at city hall in Durban. He was inaugurating new

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Inkatha branches in white and Indian communities. He wore a blue suit and a tie and spoke from a stage lined with poinsettias. The man who has compared the ANC's advance into KwaZulu to the colonization of South Africa—"At no time since the conquest of KwaZulu . . . has there been a greater threat against us as Zulus," he has said—on this night spoke from a prepared text that was filled with reassuring rhetoric about democracy and free enterprise. But Buthelezi also departed from his text for long stretches. At one point he cited reports that Inkatha might soon have more whites than blacks, because of the hemorrhaging of its black support. "Let me tell you," he said, "if Inkatha becomes a party with more whites than blacks, I will have achieved a lifelong goal of being a nonracist." Regarding Inkatha's dalliance with the pro-apartheid Conservative Party, in a confederation then called the Concerned South Africa Group (COSAG), Buthelezi said, "COSAG is not actually an alliance. We have many differences with them, but I have managed to bring the CP into the talks." He was referring to the multi-party constitutional talks that were then under way in Johannesburg. His white listeners lustily applauded.

Alas, Buthelezi and the CP, along with other right-wing Afrikaner parties and homeland leaders, have since organized themselves into a "Freedom Alliance" and walked out of the constitutional talks. They have threatened to boycott the upcoming elections. Elections are no panacea, Buthelezi warned his listeners in Durban. "Look what happened in Angola."

That has long been the nightmare scenario: the so-called Savimbi option. The Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi, who was backed for years by South Africa and the United States, spurned the election he lost in 1992 in his war-wracked country and led his guerrilla followers back into the bush. In the year since then some 50,000 more Angolans have been killed, and two million of the country's 12 million people have fled the fighting, cramming into city slums and refugee camps. Significantly, Savimbi has forsaken his obsolete anti-communist rhetoric. Now he casts his cynical bid for power as a defense of his minority Ovimbundu people—though the Ovimbundus, like the Zulus of South Africa, are sharply divided.

Buthelezi's implicit threat is that he, too, after either blocking an election through boycott and violence or rejecting its outcome, will take his supporters into the bush—or at least into the shadows, from which he will wage a deniable war of murder and sabotage in cahoots with reactionary white forces, including veterans of many of the same police, army, and intelligence groups with which he has been tacitly allied all along. There are differences between the South African and Angolan situations, of course, not least in terrain and logistics. And Buthelezi would not enjoy the rear-base support or the Cold War backing that prolonged the Angolan conflict. But as the violence thus far has amply demonstrated, even a limited number of opportunists allied with criminal elements can create a lot of havoc.

One might more aptly call it the Nkomo option. After independence from white rule, in 1980, neighboring Zimbabwe disintegrated into internecine bush war when a band of former guerrilla fighters loyal to Joshua Nkomo, the leader of the smaller of two guerrilla factions that fought against Ian Smith's minority regime, began waging a low-level insurgency of murder and sabotage in the southwest provinces of Matabeleland. Zimbabwe's Matabeleland war—fueled in no small part by South African agents bent on destabilizing and discrediting their new black-ruled neighbor—brought out the worst in the young government of Robert Mugabe, which embarked on a vicious scorched-earth counterinsurgency campaign against the minority Ndebele people, who were presumed to support the insurgents. Thousands were killed; many were tortured. Ugly headlines proliferated overseas, and investors shied away. The bloodshed waned and waxed until Nkomo accepted a deal that gave him a job rich with patronage and kickback potential in a de facto one-party state.

Optimists in South Africa observe that whereas in Zimbabwe a legal state of emergency that paved the way for widespread human-rights abuses under Ian Smith was re-enacted after independence, yielding many of the same abuses in Matabeleland, South Africa has repealed many of its draconian security laws, and the new constitution—passed by Parliament last December—includes impressive rights guarantees. The danger is that a new black-led government will be trying to consolidate its power and extend the rule of law while confronting a lawless, ethnically based insurgency. Efforts to suppress the insurgents and at the same time respect human rights would likely prove ineffective. The challenge, daunting under any circumstances, would have to be met by newly integrated government security forces led by veterans of the old security forces and old MK cadres; when they were fighting each other, neither side was known for enlightened methods. Government abuses against Zulus presumed to support the insurgency would likely ratchet up support for the insurgency, and discredit the government.

Those who perpetually wonder whether Buthelezi has it in him to bring about such a war tend to forget that he has already been waging such a war for nearly a decade—at enormous cost to his own people in particular. He and many of his allies, white and black, have enough blood on their hands to provide a strong disincentive to trusting their fate to either the rule of law or the mercy of embittered (and often lawless) adversaries. Buthelezi would not be the first militant nationalist to bring ruin on his own people, but all of South Africa would pay the price. The headlines and television images overseas would frighten away investors. The economy would deteriorate further. Conditions in the townships which have proved fertile ground for demagogues and warlords alike would worsen. At issue is not whether South Africa will explode but whether it will continue to burn.

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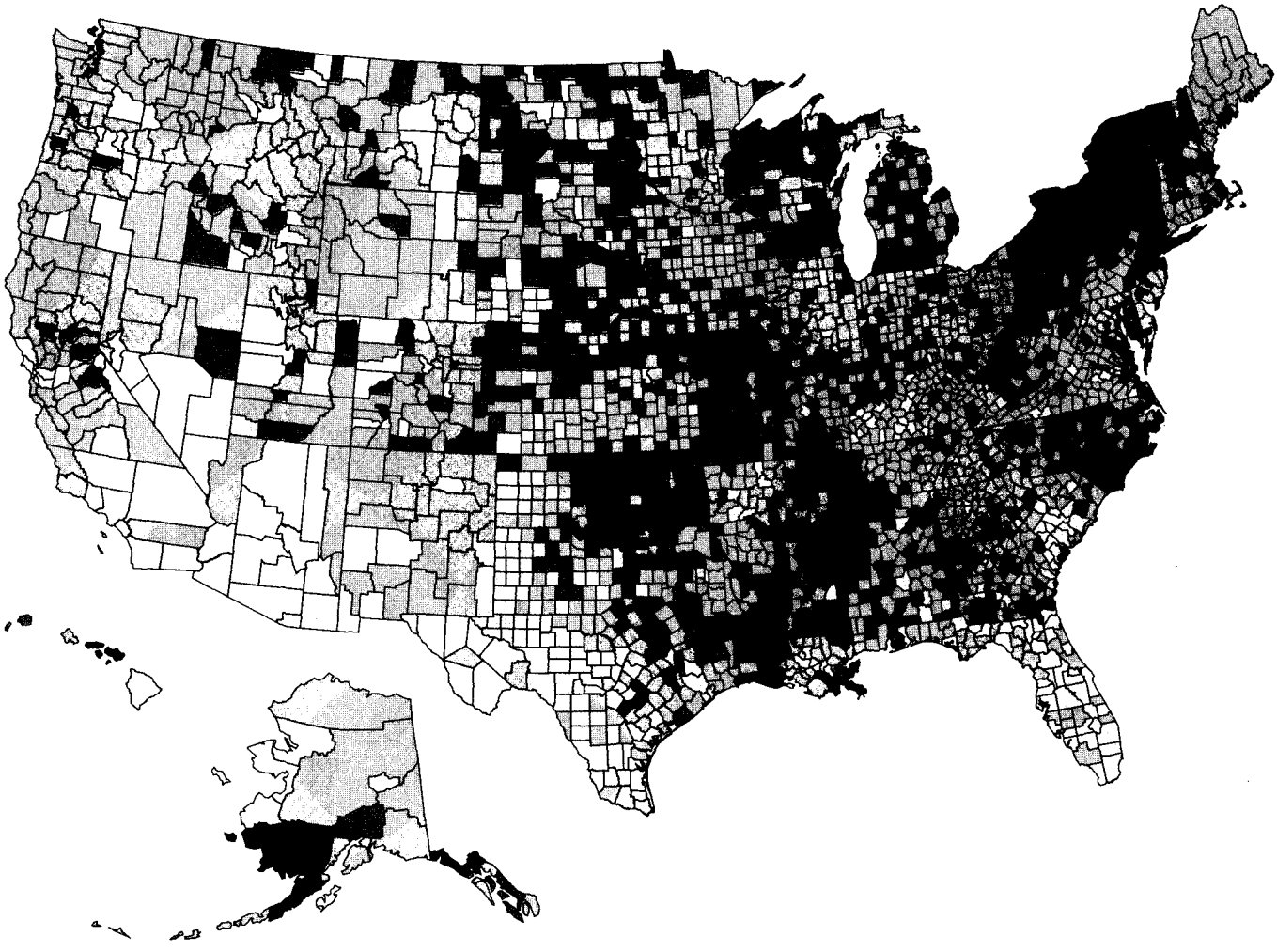
Troubled Bridges



THE Federal Highway Administration oversees the inspection of all of the country's 575,413 bridges, and it classifies almost 20 percent of them as "structurally deficient." A structurally deficient bridge is not necessarily in danger of imminent collapse; for example, the category includes many bridges that are still safe but have vehicle-weight restrictions.

More than 80 percent of all U.S. bridges are located east of the geographic midpoint between the coasts. The skewed distribution is due in part to the way the Midwest and Great Plains states were settled—in the so-called "township-and-range" pattern, which resulted in the laying down of land parcels and roadways in evenly spaced grids; in order to maintain this even spacing, many bridges had to be built over small waterways. Iowa, for example, contains more bridges than Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming combined.

The fact that the nation's midsection has the highest concentration of bridges is closely related to why, as shown on the map above, a large percentage of the region's bridges are structurally deficient. Many of the country's bridges are owned by counties or other small jurisdictions; in the Midwest, where there are large numbers of rural counties with many bridges and few people, bridges have become a serious financial liability. Because the federal government does not normally fund preventive maintenance, these jurisdictions sometimes find it cost-effective to let their bridges deteriorate to levels at which they are eligible for federal repair or replacement funds.

Structurally deficient bridges as a percentage of all bridges, by county

- 32 percent or more
- 19 to 31.9 percent
- 5 to 18.9 percent
- 4.9 percent or less

Source: Federal Highway Administration, 1993

The percentage of structurally deficient bridges should increase in the next ten years, in large part because tens of thousands of bridges built on interstate highways during the boom years following the Second World War will soon be in need of major repairs. The Secretary of Transportation estimates that federal, state, and local governments will need to increase their yearly funding by almost 40 percent to meet the surging need for bridge rehabilitation. —*Eugene Peck*

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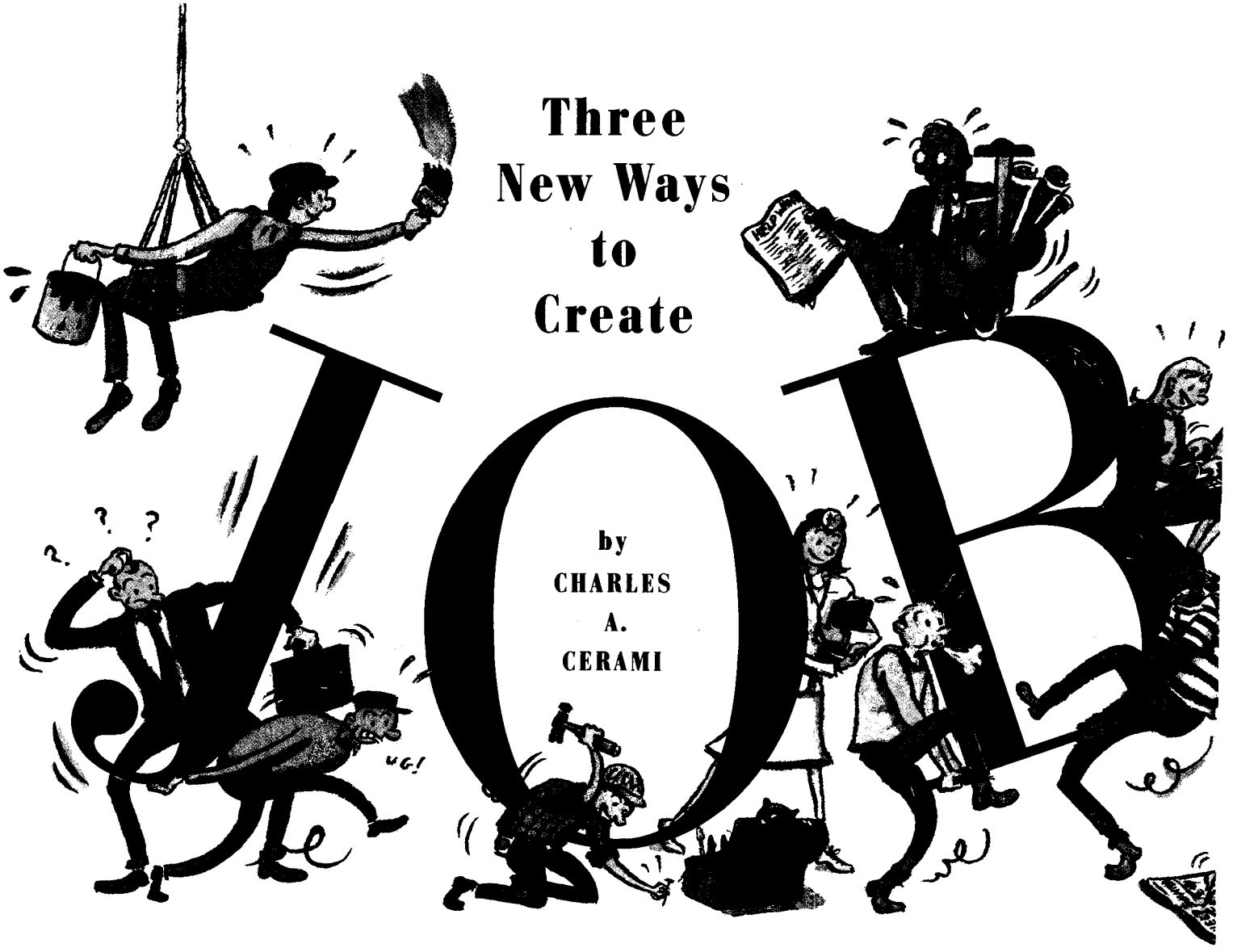
Three New Ways to Create JOBS

by CHARLES A. CERAMI



As joblessness grows and companies eliminate employees in the name of efficiency and productivity, a valuable opportunity is being ignored. In one expert's opinion, tax credits, higher interest rates, and aggressive development of overseas markets can create permanent jobs, stimulate the economy, and make possible the host of quality-of-life programs America desires

SOMETHING about today's kind of joblessness is different from the brief spasms of unemployment that used to accompany post–Second World War recessions. Economists shudder when they hear that a shortage of jobs has been lurking for two decades—even during times of "economic growth." Recent improvements will be drowned by more planned layoffs this year and next. Many companies, moreover, say they do not intend to hire more workers, regardless of how their business does.

How have political and economic leaders responded? Whenever the Clinton Administration meets with business leaders to discuss jobs, it discovers that all they want to talk about is efficiency and productivity—in effect, how to get rid of more employees. There's plenty of talk of how Mexico or Asia may prove to be a bonanza, but nothing is being done to create real, permanent jobs. Our government is coasting on the old false hope that once we rouse the economy, jobs will appear automatically.

Can something be done? Here are three approaches that, if tried together, will make a difference. They are not just one person's thoughts. They are distilled from thirteen years of discussing this subject with many U.S. and foreign officials, up to the level of Prime Minister.

Sixteen respected world leaders worked with me, first to prepare a 1985 *New York Times* series that foresaw a "looming worldwide job shortage" in the mid-1990s, and later to write a book offering possible solutions. These solutions have now been updated. None of the participants are extremists. They are all in the mainstream of world affairs—people like William Roth, Republican senator from Delaware; Bob Gra-

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ham, Democratic senator from Florida; Claude Cheysson, a former French Foreign Minister and European Community commissioner; and Jacques de Groote, one of the International Monetary Fund's most creative executive directors.

One of these ideas could be put into effect within weeks, another in months, and the results might be measurable during 1994. The third proposal would have multiple effects, some needing several years to make themselves known; but we would enjoy the benefits for a century or more.

An Incentive to Hire

THE Administration should very powerfully urge Congress to enact a new law—a Human Employment Tax Credit. This means giving companies a cash incentive to hire more people.

We must stop regarding employment as merely a peripheral effect of economic well-being. Jobs are not the second step on the ladder to full economic recovery. They have to be the first step. The reason the Japanese suffer less in recessions than Americans do is that their workers are generally kept on the job. Right now, when joblessness in their Western markets is battering Japan's sales, their own unemployment is under three percent, less than half of ours and only a fourth of Europe's rate. For a Japanese businessman, firing is the last thought that comes to mind. You don't fire your spouse; you don't fire your workers. As a result, even though people spend less than usual when the economy is soft, they do spend. And they pay taxes. In our system joblessness is the worst stumbling block.

The Human Employment Tax Credit would attempt to create jobs quickly. It is the exact opposite of a very damaging U.S. tax break called the Investment Credit. This device, widely used from the 1960s into the 1980s, encouraged companies to buy more labor-saving machinery by promising them a federal tax credit. Since we are a world of and for human beings, why on earth destroy human jobs? In the age-old way of the Emperor's New Clothes, most experts say—all too confidently—that new technology increases productivity, which in turn enables a country to compete against others and raise its standard of living.

The study of productivity, however, has become a religion, and its disciples have trouble agreeing on the nature of its effects. Basically, you divide total output by the total number of hours required to produce that output, and you get a number that rises as certain jobs can be completed in fewer hours. Whether the increase is good or bad depends on the situation. Productivity buffs divide into several subschools that focus on worker attitudes, work ethic, managerial performance, environmental factors, excess use of foreign parts, and other issues. Henry Kelly and Andrew Wyckoff, of the government's Office of Technology Assessment, made a study showing that the statistics used by productivity experts are wildly skewed. They wrote, for example,

> Government statistics treat spending on the intellectual capabilities of the work force no differently than spending on candy bars. The data suggests that a company is deemed to be investing if it purchases a new machine, but not if it pays for the employee training needed to use that machine efficiently.

A commonplace is that far more Americans now work in the service sector than in manufacturing. That statistical imbalance has created a fear that we're turning into a nation of low-paid hamburger-flippers, since the lack of productivity gains in services would rule out substantial pay increases. But improved calculations by the Bureau of Economic Analysis reveal a startling possibility: service-industry pay per worker has apparently been rising by 1.5 percent a year, while manufacturing pay has increased only 1.1 percent annually. The nation's net productivity must be higher than had been supposed. Thus we can move ahead on programs for putting more people to work with less fear of falling behind other nations.

Like running toward the wrong goal in a football game, dashing for higher productivity may be progress toward exactly the reverse of the objective that industry should be striving for. In our present economy, decreeing that a company must produce more with the same number of people, or even fewer, means that some of the workers are done for. The old Investment Credit—applauded as a productivity booster—was paying companies to lay off workers.

The proposed new credit would turn the principle around, granting companies tax breaks in proportion to the number of permanent workers they add to their payrolls. They wouldn't have to forgo improved equipment. Companies would be told, "Buy all the machines you want. But be aware that your corporate tax bill can be scaled down if you

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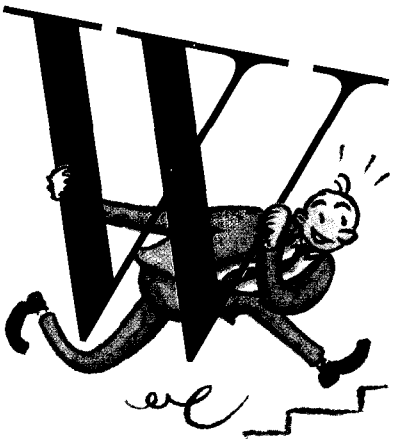

e must stop regarding employment as merely a peripheral effect of economic well-being. Jobs are not the second step on the ladder to full recovery. They have to be the first step.

are able to take on more permanent employees. The money is yours. You decide."

Until such a plan is put into practice, no one can guarantee the result. Some factories have discovered that blending high tech with a little more human labor input can yield higher-quality production, and fewer rejects. The advantages of increased employment are even clearer in the service sector, especially retailing. The growing tendency to run drugstores, stationery shops, office-supply stores, hardware stores, and food markets, among other kinds of stores, with only a cashier up front and one person to stock the shelves is irritating to many customers. They may waste quite a bit of time finding the cough syrup they want, the right wrench, or a certain size envelope, just because they can find no one to answer a brief question. Their disenchantment must be showing up in sales figures, because several new stores are making a point of mentioning in TV commercials how much *service* they give. One kind of store that had moved very far away from personal service—home-improvement centers—is stressing that the customer is always within easy reach of an employee who can even give do-it-yourself advice. If the centers got a tax credit, they might hire even more workers.

Would this plan strain the federal budget, as tax credits often do? No, just the reverse. A Human Employment Tax Credit would be virtually cost-free, for it is unlikely in today's climate that many workers hired in this way would have found jobs otherwise. The credit would take effect only when someone was hired. But that new worker would become a consumer and taxpayer, paying federal withholding tax at once, so the U.S. Treasury would take in new money months before the employer was granted the credit.

Don't Push on a String

GOVERNMENT should stop trying to "push on a string." That's an expression that has been used to describe the Federal Reserve's practice of lowering interest rates whenever the government wants to stimulate business. It's also called pushing on wet spaghetti. It hardly ever promotes new investment or expansion.

Literally hundreds of in-depth interviews with CEOs, as background for the books I wrote on management and finance from the 1960s through the 1980s, engraved this lesson on my mind: even in those days when they longed for *their companies to grow, these decision-makers were flatly* against expanding them unless they saw customer demand beginning to build. The idea of borrowing to grow just because interest rates were low got a frown or a laugh.

Even more vivid in my memory is the earlier time I lived through as a junior executive in a mid-sized manufacturing company. The firm had started small, making cast parts for dentistry and surgery. Then the firm discovered that our casting process was perfect for making the concave blades used in the hot end of a jet engine. That division quickly became the biggest in the company. When Pratt & Whitney, our main customer for blades, gave us a huge order that required *more plant capacity, we broke ground for a whole new fac*tory. A recession chose that moment to strike, and, as luck usually has it, the new building began to show big cost overruns. I can still feel the tension that spread through the whole office. We were in sound shape, so we could borrow. But every expenditure was made uneasily. Old equipment scheduled for replacement was repaired instead. I had the humbling task of going over the list of publications we subscribed to and reducing the numbers of copies. Our new plant had to go forward, but I remember the respected vice-president who was my direct boss saying, "We invest all these millions to triple our capacity. Then suppose the airline industry sags for a while. Suppose P and W says that's enough blades for the present. All that unused space will be a dead weight on the whole company." That's a picture of any business when things sour.

So when managers and directors meet in slow times, the fact that they can borrow money cheaply at that moment doesn't make them jump to vote for expansion. When they see signs that customers' orders are piling up, they'll find the money to grow on, whatever the rate.

But don't lower interest rates prime the pump by making consumers spend? Sure, when they are optimistic. Not when they're hearing about layoffs. Again, jobs are the key.

This doesn't mean that interest rates are of minor importance. But their tendency to make mischief when misapplied along with other measures is great. Many events of this century prove that point. When Franklin D. Roosevelt became

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The North American Free Trade Agreement is handing us a great opportunity in Mexico. Now we must let most of Central and South America open the door they have been peeking through.

President, in 1933, very low interest rates were among the first weapons he resorted to. The belief that he quickly ended the Great Depression is wrong. He improved some conditions, and his charisma quieted fears. But double-digit unemployment remained a problem through the 1930s and ended only when this country entered the Second World War.

An even more revealing sequence of events came after the oil-price shock of 1979–1980. When inflation rose above 10 percent, Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker tried to fight it with very high interest rates. When you raise rates sharply, you're *pulling* on a string, and that does work if you want to slow business. Volcker did begin to cool inflation, but he also pushed unemployment up to a forty-year high of 9.7 percent in 1982. At that point he eased interest rates downward while the Reagan Administration, in the words of the Nobel laureate James Tobin, added "the most massive Keynesian fiscal stimuli ever given to the U.S. economy in peacetime. . . . In effect, the fiscal policy gave the Fed too much help." Eighteen million new jobs, many in defense, were created at that time, and the unemployment rate dropped from 9.7 percent in 1982 to 5.2 percent in 1989. Those huge defense outlays plus high consumer spending led to the enormous increase in federal debt and deficits that will burden us for years to come.

Now, in the recession just past and its sluggish sequel, rhetoric and low interest rates are being tried. The effectiveness of this policy in creating jobs can be judged from the statistics heard month after month. Ironically, they are often intended to sound like good news: "A Labor Department report today announced a drop in U.S. unemployment from 7 percent to 6.8 percent." A few sentences later, however, they are followed by words that have come to seem almost inevitable: "Unfortunately, most of the new jobs are part-time or temporary."

What, then, would be an appropriate interest-rate policy for today's situation? Bearing in mind that it would be only part of the therapy, like keeping a patient's room temperature right while providing medication, *a moderately high interest rate would be best for our present condition.* One of the reasons is an often overlooked factor: a considerable part of our population benefits from high interest rates. These are the people who earn interest, rather than pay it—on certificates of deposit, Treasury bills, savings accounts, and especially money-market funds. This part of America contains a great many retirees and those in their last decade before retirement—one of the most affluent groups in the country. They own stocks, but usually focus more on fixed instruments such as bonds. These are people who routinely buy good new cars, vacation homes, fine clothes, gifts, sports equipment, and expensive trips. They became ecstatic some years ago when they could earn 13 to 15 percent on money funds, and their confidence fueled the consumer spending that ran to excess. But today's other extreme truly depresses these former spenders. Many are living on just half the income they had when they retired. Earning sums like 2.5 percent and then seeing those earnings taxed really offends them. This helps the stock averages, because some of the savers are forced to try for gains they can live on. But we see that even stratospheric market flights no longer create jobs. We sometimes had less unemployment when the Dow Jones Industrials were between 600 and 800 than we do now that they are at 3,800. Only product sales, not stock sales, create a foundation for jobs.

Interest rates two to three points higher than they are now would actually increase consumer activity. They would also help to do away with the misleading notion that nothing more needs to be done because government is on a stimulative path. We are not on any path, and facing up to that is a step toward fixing it.

Some will say that this analysis borrows from Keynes's works on unemployment; others may say it clashes with them. I cheerfully agree with both assessments, while noting that Keynes, like other great innovators, was constantly rethinking and adjusting his principles to accord with new situations. Today Keynes would be contending with a labor force that has been transformed by technology, the two-income family, and enormous immigration. These factors would normally make him call for heavy public deficit spending to spur aggregate demand. But Keynes would also see that the burden of debt makes such a new stimulus unthinkable. He would want to adjust the calculation of how much aggregate demand is needed to create new employment, perhaps basing it on a trading area larger than just our home economy. In the United States, where total foreign

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trade used to be a minor part of the economy, we must now recognize that several foreign countries have become in effect awkward parts of ourselves, draining money from us and then returning some of it in loan form. This means not only Japan but also those who sell us oil at many times the price it was in Keynes's day. So he might agree with the point I will now turn to—the need to augment our own aggregate demand with funds from the outside world.

Expand Foreign Trade

WE must get to work at once on a long-term program for expanding our markets to include millions of potential consumers around the world. We have been trying to stretch our same old consumer base to make jobs for many millions more people. All our chronic poor, all our unemployed, all our recent immigrants, legal and illegal, need to be provided for out of a pot that they cannot at present contribute to. While we're waiting for them to become givers as well as takers, we should be reaching out to many in other countries who have the energy and resources to become consumers faster than these struggling Americans.

I am not talking about foreign aid. Most of that has been a great failure. I mean that we should give incentives to U.S. companies to expand their horizons and undertake more smart joint ventures and other direct investments overseas.

NAFTA is handing us a great opportunity in Mexico—with far, far more pluses than minuses. Canada is already a major partner for solid, though not explosive, growth. Now we must let most of Central and South America open the door they have been peeking through—in particular, Chile (already claiming to be first in line), Argentina (potential superstar if President Carlos Saúl Menem can stay on), Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay. Some of these are already a little trade group of their own. Venezuela is a definite candidate for admission. Some other countries must be handled more gingerly, because of drug and terrorist problems. But basically the whole hemisphere is asking to be our partners—for the first time ever. If we don't want to play, Japan and Europe do.

The NAFTA battle was a godsend, because it enabled the Clinton Administration to explain to voters the importance of international trade agreements. Workers' fears that jobs are being shipped abroad have scant validity. Again and again when one of our companies puts a plant abroad, sales from the United States to that country go up. This is because the foreign plant produces only a few models or styles, which make the firm name and quality familiar to locals and interest them in the whole line plus spare parts—made by Americans. Caterpillar and Motorola are among the companies that have followed this pattern.

In Asia we'll have to work hard—though the effort will be worthwhile. Those countries are playing the Japanese game with us, selling to the United States right and left, but balking at letting us come into their markets. President Clinton has the right idea: letting them know that we are interested only in equal treatment; otherwise we can close doors too. Since affluent consumers are ever more numerous in Asia, those countries can help to create many American jobs.

Trade, in other words, is the brightest spot in our bleak job picture. But one big problem remains: an adequate effort by our governments—federal and state. They should send skilled and resourceful representatives to advanced countries whose big companies might set up plants here. Some state governments already do this shrewdly and lavishly—with splendid results. South Carolina has attracted so many German plants to one area that the road leading to it is nicknamed the Autobahn. Low U.S. wages and costs are the main attraction (almost 35 percent below the German level!) but the states' attitude, tax breaks, and promises of improved roads and new schools are factors too.

Clinton should encourage the other states to imitate these examples. The same lesson should be learned by his Commerce Department, which keeps trimming the information services it offers to American businessmen. U.S. companies should be helped to negotiate with the foreign plants that are already here. Many could make parts on a subcontract basis. This is an immensely lucrative enterprise.

THE three steps outlined above are safe, cost-effective, and definite. They can give us many real jobs within months, and then a long-lasting expansion of our markets which can also create gains for the world we operate in.

Scores of other initiatives are needed to make us again the prosperous America we have known, including a serious anti-poverty program. From 1959 to 1973 the proportion of Americans living in poverty was cut almost exactly in half—from 22.4 percent to 11.1 percent. By 1988, however, the rate was back up to 13 percent, and by 1992 it stood at 14.5 percent. That little percentage represents 36,900,000 people. By now the total must be well over 37 million. Even if we had no more-human reason to raise up our own neighbors, don't we have to do it because we frankly need their business? No nation has ever been rich enough to ignore a seventh of its people. Maybe thinking of them as potential customers will give us new strength.

Jobs won't be handed to our economy as a reward for our other merits. We can work on the environment, adjust taxes, vaccinate children, provide health care for all, even cure AIDS. But we still won't have enough jobs—unless we start creating them. Then we can do all the rest.

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Sir Walter Scott and John James Audubon

by NANCY CALDWELL SOREL

WHEN Audubon stepped off the New Orleans cotton packet in Liverpool that summer of 1826, with his long curling hair and frontier garb, carrying his big portfolio with its 200 precious drawings, he was a European's idea of an American backwoodsman. In fact he was born in the West Indies and brought up in France, but years in the American hinterlands had obscured his origins. Nowhere did he feel more at home than in the dark Kentucky forests, where strange birds nested, or in the great migratory swamps of Louisiana. But no one there respected a man who painted birds; Audubon needed to validate his passion—needed to publish his *Birds of America*.

Britain, the native land of his wife, Lucy, home of learned gentlemen and rich nobility, might be the place. He carried letters of introduction, but the birds themselves were his entrée—no one had ever seen birds caught in action like this. His visit to Edinburgh was a triumph. Everyone of note came to look except for one man Audubon greatly admired, Sir Walter Scott—who didn't come because, he explained later, it was what everyone else was doing.

Scott was the literary lion of his time; pirated editions of *Waverley* and *Rob Roy* made their way even to backcountry America. Audubon, no doubt, felt a kinship with Scott's romantic Highlanders. One January morning a friend brought word that the great man had come into town from his baronial home and would receive him. Audubon threw on his coat, donned his boots (he often dashed out in his slippers), and tore off breathless with anticipation.

Sir Walter greeted him affably in a purple silk dressing gown, but Audubon, struck speechless with awe, evidenced none of the intensity and charm he brought to Edinburgh dinner parties. And when he returned with his drawings, Scott, no art critic or ornithologist, did not recognize their value. What interested the novelist was this long-haired American primitive who had roamed the wilderness with Indians. He knew hero material when he saw it. ❦

Illustration by Edward Sorel

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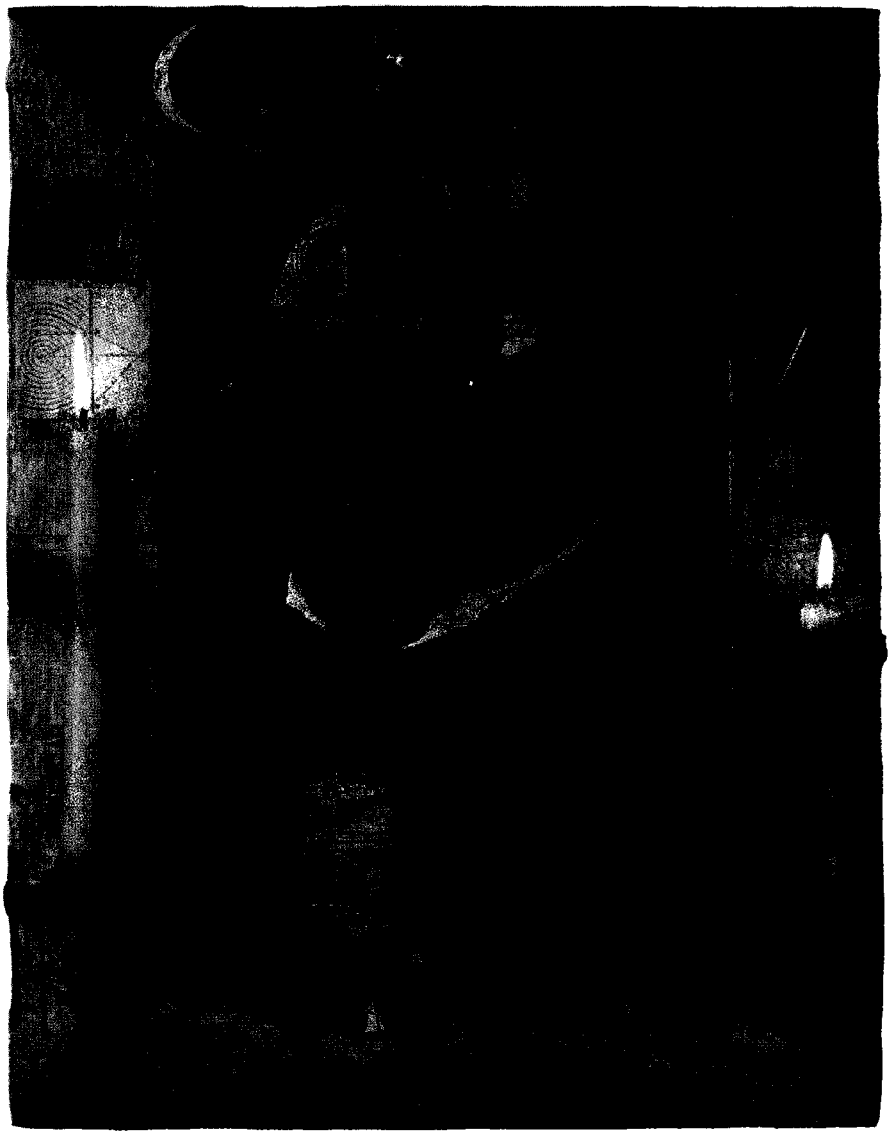

Voice of the Mind

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's Schubert song cycle is endlessly instructive, even if it isn't always transporting

by Matthew Gurewitsch

THE sad news has quietly been getting around that Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (born in 1925), since the fifties the pre-eminent master of the German art song, has retired from the concert stage—driven away, it is said, by unkind reviews. Can this explanation be true? Fischer-Dieskau, who according to folklore has for decades been papering the walls of his Berlin bathroom with critics' attacks? Fischer-Dieskau, who as recently as two summers ago could deliver Schubert's hour-long cycle *Die schöne Müllerin* (*The Miller's Fair Daughter*) in an account so fresh, so original, and so technically accomplished as to fasten the hyperfashionable, hypercritical audience of the Salzburg Festival onto every phrase, every inflection?

People argued about Fischer-Dieskau in his heyday; they have argued about him in the twilight of his long career; they will go on arguing as long as an audience for lieder exists. And so they should. Everyone admits that his voice had a thousand colors, but what of simple beauty? Everyone knows that he has a mind of infinite subtlety, but what about a heart? A master he assuredly was, from his earliest days, but is he a good model? On these questions there can never be consensus. It is certain, though, that Fischer-Dieskau's passion, intelligence, curiosity, and daring have been of an order to transform a classical, perhaps academic, heritage into a brave new world. Performers of like stature appear once in a generation, a lifetime, or a century.

Now that Fischer-Dieskau has crept from our company, Deutsche Grammophon has at last reissued the most monumental part of his sprawling discography: the three-volume compendium of songs by Franz Schubert, recorded from 1966 to 1972, formerly available on twenty-nine LPs, now complete on twenty-one compact discs running twenty-four and a half hours. (Song texts and translations have been reprinted, but not, unfortunately, the index of titles and first lines or the excellent biographical notes on Schubert's poets.) The survey, undertaken with the late Gerald Moore (at the time the prince of accompanists) at the piano, follows, with minor adjustments, the order of Eusebius Mandyczewski's still-standard edition of the Schubert songs, published from 1884 to 1897. Items that presuppose a female interpreter are omitted, as are certain ballads of such monstrous length—some close to thirty minutes—that not even the tireless Fischer-Dieskau could push his way through. (In his wake other singers have taken up the challenge, with some interesting results.) Fischer-Dieskau's tally stands at 463 songs, including the cycles *Die schöne Müllerin* (twenty songs), *Winterreise* (*Winter Journey*, twenty-four), and *Schwanengesang* (*Swan Song*, fourteen). Other singers account them-

Illustration by David Pohl

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selves specialists with a repertoire of, say, the cycles plus three dozen other songs. No singer before or since Fischer-Dieskau has gone into this literature in anything approaching such depth.

WHO was Franz Schubert? The world, vague in its grasp of history, and sentimental, has long thought of him as the chubby Biedermeier successor to the discredited rococo Mozart of the chocolate boxes, warbling his native wood-notes wild through the cobbled streets of old Vienna and the surrounding countryside. This much is true: He was born in 1797 to the master of a by-no-means-flourishing private school, showed early musical promise, sang as a boy in the choir of the court chapel, and studied composition with Antonio Salieri—the same Salieri slandered by posterity as the poisoner of Mozart. As a young man he attracted a circle of devoted admirers who gathered for private concerts of his music, called Schubertiades. He died in 1828, at the age of thirty-one. (Mozart, also struck down before his time, reached thirty-five.)

Earlier generations assumed that typhoid fever was the cause of Schubert's death. Recent scholars have diagnosed syphilis; moreover, they have associated the composer with a secret (outlaw) milieu of homosexuals—which among other things would help make sense of some very puzzling songs to texts by literati of his acquaintance. In "Im Freien" ("Outdoors"), for instance, such a subtext can bring into focus the hazy intimations of passionate friendships under the starry sky. It may also hold the key to the obscure allegory "Uraniens Flucht" ("Urania's Escape"). Zeus, outraged by humanity's treatment of the poor goddess Urania, wants to smite the feckless planet, but at the sight of a pair of lovers he stays his hand. Are the lovers two men? The (homosexual) poet's circumspect wording seems calculated to leave open that possibility. His friends would have known what he meant. Love like ours is the thing itself, he could be saying; it redeems the world.

Whatever further revelations the biographers may have in store, the sources of Schubert's art, like Shakespeare's, lie deeper than did ever plummet sound. His output was prodigious: nine symphonies, culminating in the revelation of the "Great" C Major; more than a dozen piano sonatas and a host of sublime shorter pi-

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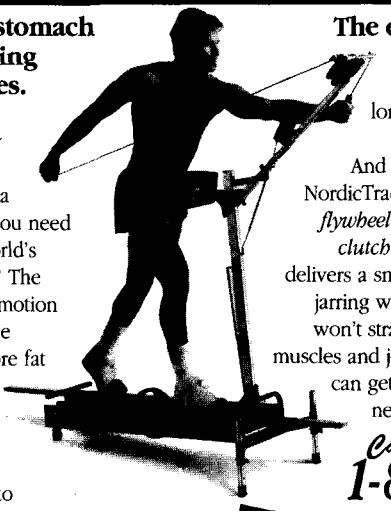

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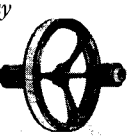

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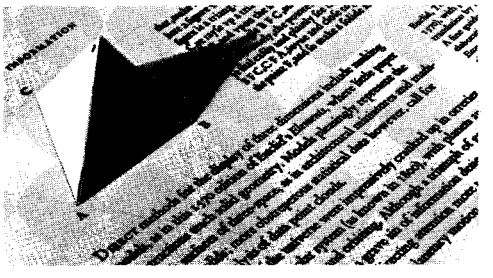

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A Doctor's Encounter with His Own Mortality

RICHARD SELZER

On a spring afternoon in 1991, Richard Selzer, a retired surgeon and renowned essayist, collapsed in his study. Rushed to the hospital, he was diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease. Selzer lapsed into a coma—and began a painful journey to a place where there was "more than a hint of death."

This is the story of that journey, a trip to the underworld of disease, where Selzer explores with eloquence and humor the unknown regions of unconsciousness, the body and its spirit, medical treatment and its limitations, and the mysterious drama of the struggle between life an death.

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Send your solved Puzzler "Crazy Eights" (found on page 131) to: *The Atlantic Monthly*, March Puzzler Contest, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116. *The Atlantic* will randomly draw three names from among all correct entries received by March 14. The winners' names will be published in the May issue. In addition, each of the winners will receive a complimentary one-year subscription to *Tough Cryptics*, a bimonthly cryptics publication.

Rules: Only one entry per person allowed. No purchase necessary. No entries can be returned. All decisions are final. *The Atlantic* is not responsible for late or lost mail. Contest open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, 18 years or older, except employees of *The Atlantic* and their immediate families. Winners will be notified by mail. Contest void where prohibited and subject to all state, federal, and local laws and regulations.

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ano pieces; fifteen string quartets, a string quintet, and two piano trios, all glories of the chamber-music literature; a host of operas, ten or so completed, though none ever established itself on the stage; dozens of masses and dances; and, of course, the songs.

Fischer-Dieskau's three volumes comprise roughly two thirds of the songs. The British pianist Graham Johnson, Moore's successor and to my mind his better, has reached the halfway mark in a superb thematic, nonchronological survey of them all (on the Hyperion label). The project will amount to some three dozen well-filled compact discs and involve as many vocalists. Still, the volume and the arrangement of Fischer-Dieskau's material are sufficiently imposing to suggest a reference work, and inevitably the set (in the old phrase dear to professors) "smells of the lamp."

UNTIL you start to listen, that is. Whether you start at the beginning and soldier all the way through or jump straight to a particular song, you will find not one reading that is dutiful or perfunctory. And the range is simply incalculable: here a lyric of graceful simplicity which has been taken up as a folk song, there a dramatic ballad calling upon the artillery of the star orator; here a florid aria in search of an opera, there tracts of gloomy philosophy; here moving pictures of the ocean, there of the stars. No composer conveys a more exact impression of the natural world in its infinite variety; none looks with greater compassion and understanding into the depths of the mind and heart.

Often the ladder to Schubert's world of wonders is a golden lyric; equally often it is verse that on the page looks trite and conventional. But just as true poets can transcend their ideas, so blessed composers can transcend their texts, not leaving the words behind exactly but discovering in them dimensions of unsuspected richness. In Fischer-Dieskau's performances, with Moore's able assistance, these truths are told.

And yet, if sheer vocal splendor is the criterion, Fischer-Dieskau seldom earns a perfect grade. In passages that are soft or of medium volume, he has at his disposal shades as delicate, blooming, bitter, harsh, or wan as his imagination could wish. Not only his temper and character

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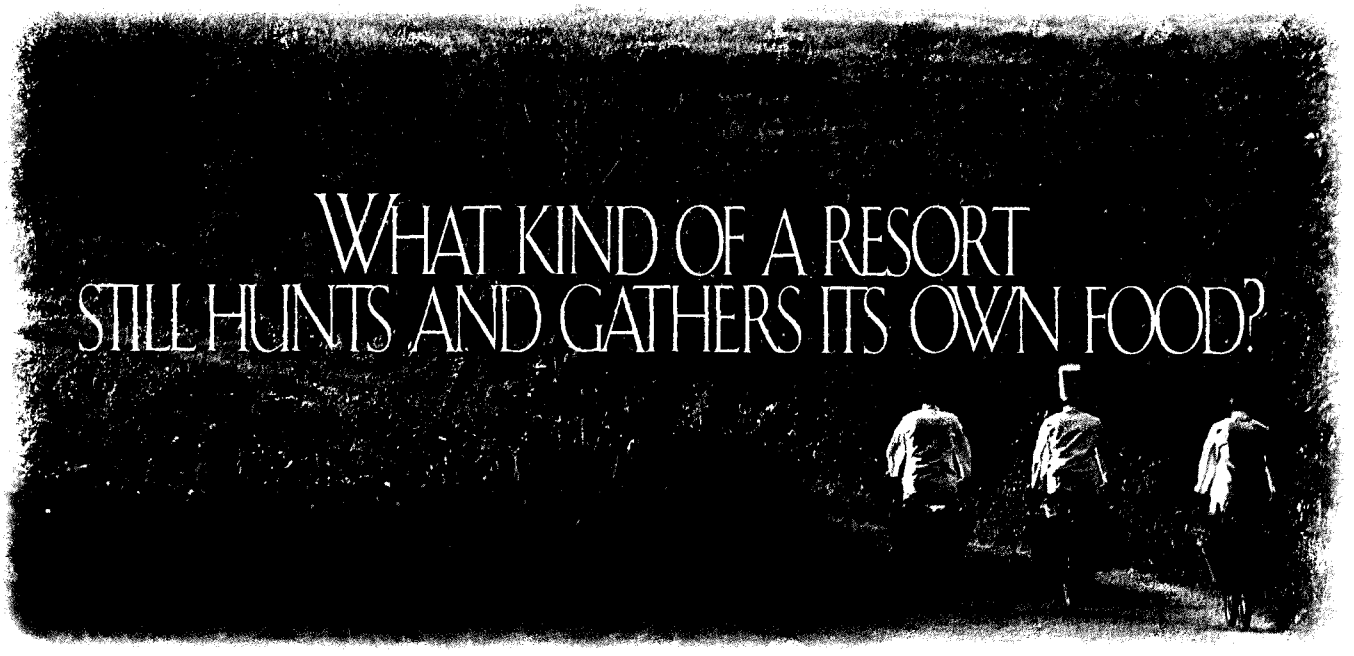
but even his age can seem to change within a phrase, within a note. But especially at the not uncommon moments combining high intensity with high volume and high pitch, a basic dryness in his tone tugs song toward the sound of talk. A singer is never wrong to keep a listener's mind on the words, of course, but that is a different matter. When Fischer-Dieskau falters, the problem is not that verbal meanings suddenly overwhelm musical ones. It is that for an instant we hear his voice rather than his song.

Throughout his career detractors have taken Fischer-Dieskau to task for affectation. He would x-ray even the shortest lyrics for the intricacies below the surface, rendering what he found there with a moment-to-moment clarity bordering on the hallucinatory. He proceeded on the apparent assumption that nothing in the songs was obvious, nothing to be taken for granted. Consequently, he never stopped making discoveries, as the Schubert set amply documents. Thus "Lied eines Schiffers an die Dioskuren" ("Seafarer's Song to the Dioscuri"), which has suggested to other singers a prayerful serenity, in Fischer-Dieskau's rendition expresses brimming energy and self-reliance. He had the wit to see "Der Zwerg" ("The Dwarf") for the miniature Gothic tragedy it is, and staged it for the mind's eye with subtle accents that, like pastel spotlights, pick out the shipboard queen and her diminutive assassin. He sang the graceful close of "Der blinde Knabe" ("The Blind Boy") not as that little song's big tune but quietly, as if with the child's own inward smile.

WHAT made Fischer-Dieskau's interpretations controversial was less their implicit divergence from received wisdom than their quality of internal contradiction. He was never content to choose one mood for a song and sustain it. Often it seemed as if he were reading one word at a time. In "An die Leier" ("To the Lyre"), for instance, a poet finds to his astonishment that every time he tries to sing in a warlike mode, his instrument plays strains of love. "Farewell then, heroes!" he concludes. "For rather than threatening with the song of champions, my lyre will only give forth sounds of love." The rhetorical flourish with which the poet begins is, in other words, a false start. His lyric nature triumphs over his epic ambition, and this fact, rooted in his personality, determines the shape of the song. Fischer-Dieskau sees all this as well as anyone. Yet he gives "*Heldensang*" ("song of champions") in the penultimate line of the song one last heroic shading, scrupulously serving the single word rather than the larger statement of the song.

By such details he imbues every instant with exact meaning, but often the effect does not strike most listeners as "natural." At its most elaborate, his delivery resembles type set by a printer who italicizes every word, sprinkling in different fonts and point sizes for good measure. Yet is the baritone's style really more artificial than one that is less highly wrought? The artlessness of a smoother surface than the one Fischer-Dieskau usually strives for is an illusion too. Nor is he forced into his manner by limitations of vocal technique. No one, in fact, can spin out a purer legato—think of his ethereal poise as the suave Grim Reaper of "Der Jüngling und der Tod" ("The Youth and



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Peace with Egypt is the coldest possible. For its agreement to make true peace with Israel, Egypt received the huge Sinai Peninsula in which Israel had invested over $10 billion. It had created flourishing cities, some of the most advanced military and naval installations in the world, and had developed oil fields that would have made it energy independent for the foreseeable future. Without firing a shot, Egypt received all of this, plus generous grants from the United States—$40 billion to date. What Egypt gave in return was a piece of paper. And even that was hedged. It would allow Egypt to join in an "Arab War" against Israel. The peace between Israel and Egypt, which the Israelis had envisioned to be like the peace between Germany and France, turned out, unfortunately, to be the "coldest peace" possible. It is, less of a peace than a de facto state of non-belligerence. The Israeli ambassador in Cairo is isolated and blacklisted and does not participate in any official functions of the Egyptian government. There is practically no trade between the two countries and no cultural exchange. The public sector of Egypt, which constitutes 80% of the total economy is forbidden to do business with Israel. Private enterprises are actively discouraged and often threatened when they try to become engaged with Israeli firms. Israeli firms are barred form submitting tenders for local projects. For "security reasons" Israeli firms are not allowed to participate in trade fairs. Although quite a few Israelis visit Egypt, hardly any Egyptians go to Israel since those who do wish to visit are summoned to the security police for lengthy interrogation.

Not forthcoming on diplomatic front. Many Israelis have been killed in Egypt or on the Egyptian border. The Egyptian media, including the official and semi-official press, are full of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish venom, preaching hatred and prejudice. There have been numerous instances of "crazed" Egyptian soldiers shooting up Israeli buses traveling along the border highways, to the general applause of the state-controlled media. On the diplomatic front, the Egyptians aren't any more forthcoming. Egypt spearheaded the campaign to keeping the "Zionism is racism" resolution in the U.N., contrary to U.S. wishes. Egypt exerts much effort to prevent African countries from establishing or renewing diplomatic relations with Israel. Egyptian diplomats, including Butros-Butros Ghali, now secretary general of the United Nations, lobbied fervently against the loan guarantees that Israel needed to absorb and to settle the hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees who have already arrived or will still arrive form the former Soviet Union.

"Israel's present government must be commended for proceeding with the greatest caution in the current peace negotiations."

The saving grace for Israel in its very cold peace with Egypt is that the Sinai is very large, and serves as a buffer zone. But in the Golan Heights, which the Syrians wish to have returned in exchange for "peace", and the "West Bank" and Gaza, which the Palestinians whish to have given to them as a "reward" for stopping the "intifada", there is no room at all for buffer zones. Although autonomy for the native Arab population is definitely an Israeli policy goal and a commitment under the Camp David Accords, the "West Bank" and Gaza and the Golan cannot possibly be surrendered to another sovereignty for any foreseeable future. It would make Israel totally indefensible. If the peace with Egypt is an example of what peace with Syria or with the Palestinians would look like, Israel's present government must be commended for proceeding with the greatest caution in the current negotiations and not to entrust its survival to empty promises. Only when the Arabs truly accept Israel as part of the Middle East should any further "land for peace" adjustments be considered.

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Death"). The true character of Fischer-Dieskau's analytical, artful readings lies in his fantastically chiseled textures.

The interpretation of the songs Fischer-Dieskau performed throughout his career remained in constant flux. I wonder how many times he has sung the three Schubert song cycles; he has recorded each of them many times over, starting with a *Winterreise* (still available) in 1948, and he never did one the same way twice. In his final seasons before the public, as instanced in that last Salzburg *Schöne Müllerin,* he could at one moment convey an impatience too intense to allow the miller lad so much as an instant for reflection, and at the next moment point up the state of his soul with arrow-sharp deliberation. The one-to-one correspondence between word and color, typical of his work at the time of the great Schubert edition of some two decades before, had given way to a more free-floating charge of electric emotion. For all the air of authority, his interpretations were never definitive and always provisional.

In this, Fischer-Dieskau revisited his material in the spirit of a great teacher, returning to the same classroom time and again to cover the same ground with new pupils, never losing command and yet never ceasing to question. At every pass Fischer-Dieskau is shedding light.

Then why is it, I ask myself guiltily, that whenever the Schubert songs I love most start sounding in my head in the still of the night, memory plays them in other artists' voices? Elly Ameling, Marian Anderson, Janet Baker, Olaf Bär, Kathleen Battle, Barbara Hendricks, Wolfgang Holzmair, Jorma Hynninen, Alexander Kipnis, Friedrich Schorr, Gérard Souzay . . . They, not Fischer-Dieskau, are the ones who carry me over to the other side. Maybe it is that Fischer-Dieskau's mastery is like that of Henry James: axiomatic yet impossible to keep in focus. His habit of inquiry channels Schubert's message to the mind for decoding rather than to the heart.

"God send the companion a better prince!" cries Falstaff, thereby branding himself forever unfit for royal company. Reservations notwithstanding, for such gifts as Fischer-Dieskau's, thanks can but fall short. By day, at least, I return to his school gladly. Having come to the end of his Schubert set, I feel the lesson has just begun. ❦

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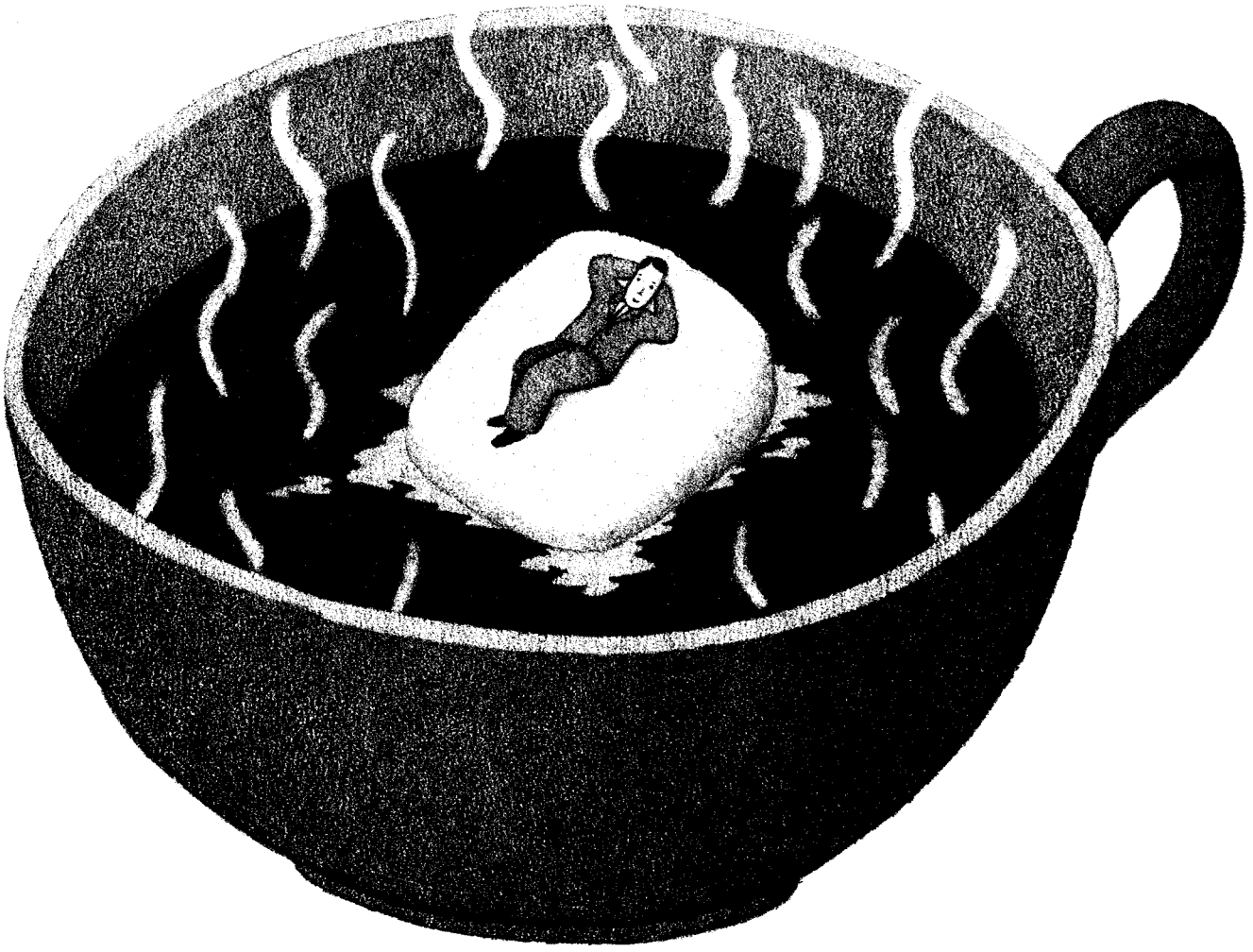

Hot Chocolate

How to make it an opulent, adult drink

by Corby Kummer

I NOISILY disdain chocolate. When the dessert menu arrives, I make a point of announcing how happy I would be if chocolate desserts ceased to exist. As the diners around me swoon over luscious mousse or ganache (chocolate beaten with cream), I ostentatiously keep my fork at a distance—not, I regret to say, my usual comportment. In post-adolescent memory I have eaten exactly half of a Gold Bar (from Fran's Chocolates, in Seattle), which is mostly almonds and caramel and is thoroughly commendable, and bitten into maybe three or four chocolate truffles I didn't finish.

But like all food-minded people with strong opinions, I'm a hypocrite. I love Oreos, and what I think of as their ne plus ultra—chocolate "*amore*" biscotti with fat squiggles of white icing from La Tempesta, in South San Francisco. And I can't possibly count the cups of hot chocolate I have drunk since discovering that it can be an opulent, adult drink. In fact, in the relentless weather of late winter I don't even try to get through a day without at least one cup of hot chocolate. Mixed with a bit of coffee, it's an incomparable restorative.

This discovery, like many in my adult life, took place in Italy—in Turin, to be exact, one of the most elegant places I know and a city dear to my heart for its pastry tradition. Piedmont, the region of which Turin is the capital, was long the property of the house of Savoy, and the French influence is still strong there, blessedly relieved by Italian ideas of lightness. On the Via Roma, one of the suspiciously wide urban axes lined with 1930s buildings which in an Italian city conjure Fascist parades, the city gathers at the Zucca caffè, not to be seen (usually the case in Turin) but because everything there is extra good. The hot chocolate at the bar is a silken, deep-mahogany drink that demands to be sipped very slowly.

Illustration by Paul Yalowitz

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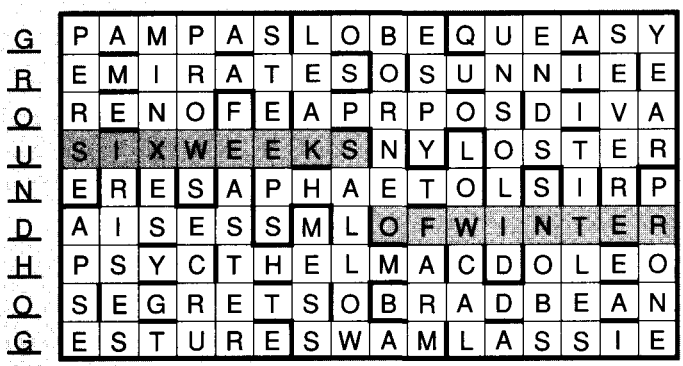

"Comings and Goings"

What comes out is GROUNDHOG. *What could be added is* SIX WEEKS OF WINTER. *The sixteen extra definitions are given here in italics. Across.* 1. PA(M)PAS; *shadowy* 5. G(LOB)-E 8. QUEASY (hidden); *lying down* 13. EMIRATES (anag.); *island* 14. SU(NNI)ER (*inn* rev.) 15. RENO (hidden); *pompous folks* 17. A-PROP-OS (*so* rev.) 18. DIVA(n); *guest at a banquet* 22. OUSTER (anag.) 24. PHAETON (anag.) 27. D-AISES (anag. + D) 31. PSYCH (hidden) 32. THELMA (anag.); *calls* 33. OLE-O; *coquettes* 34. (r)EGRETS; *yellowish* 35. BROAD BEAN (anag.) 36. GE(STUR)E (*ruts* rev.) 37. SWAM(p); *boats at the front* 38. L(ASS)IE; *spread* *Down.* 1. PERE (hidden) 2. M(a)INE'S 3. PROS (double def.) 4. STEP-S (rev.) 5. LEA (hidden) 6. BOR(N)E 7. ESP-Y; *soaks* 9. UNSO(L)D (anag. + *l*) 10. (m)ENDS; *diet* 11. SEVER (anag.) 12. YEA-R; *strict* 16. FASTER (double def.) 19. RISES (hidden) 20. A(L-L)-OW 21. LO-CAL 23. TI(L)ES 25. SO(B)S 26. PO(N)E 27. APS-E (rev.); *drain* 28. ECRU (anag.); *flowers* 29. ME-SS; *as such* 30. A-RM

Getting your cup takes time. *Baristi* (bartenders) fetch the thick hot-chocolate mixture from a small refrigerator, and after waiting patiently for it to drip out of an old milk bottle, they heat a small cupful under a milk-frothing nozzle. The very warm liquid can be consumed only at a stately pace, and the dense chocolate flavor is greatly preferable to the unctuous richness of other chocolate. After many visits during which I prodded, quizzed, and made conversation with *baristi*, I found out why I could crave this deep-chocolate experience while remaining steadfastly indifferent to conventional ones: I like cocoa powder but not chocolate.

CHOCOLATE-lovers crave the mouth-filling sensation that cocoa butter, a fat occurring naturally in cocoa beans, provides. Uniquely, cocoa butter remains solid at room temperature but melts upon contact with the body (in your hand *and* in your mouth). This property makes it among the most expensive of all comestible fats, animal or vegetable. A cocoa pod is roughly the size and shape of a big acorn squash, and contains forty-five to fifty almond-shaped beans; the best come from Ghana, Venezuela, and Indonesia. The beans are fermented, dried, shelled, and roasted, in a process very like that for coffee beans. Cocoa butter is separated out when broken roasted cocoa beans, called nibs, are pulverized and pressed; a cake containing solids and some cocoa butter remains, and is ground into cocoa powder. The final fat content of cocoa powder is anywhere from 10 to 30 percent, with an average of 22 percent in the kind consumers buy and 10 to 12 percent in the kind manufacturers use. (A certain amount of fat is necessary to round out the flavor, and besides, stripping cocoa of all its fat requires the use of chemicals that could leave questionable residues.) The fat content of unsweetened baking chocolate, by comparison, is about 55 percent; the fat content of bittersweet, semisweet, sweet, and milk chocolate, which all have cocoa butter added back in for flavor and texture, is in the 30s (the sugar and milk solids dominate, reducing the total fat content).

This doesn't necessarily mean that hot chocolate is a lot less fatty than chocolate bars and frosting—after all, you can make it with whole milk or cream. But at least

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you control the fat content, after that of the cocoa powder is taken into account. You can certainly melt chocolate into milk, and if you love cocoa butter, you'll probably enjoy drinking it. But what I prefer is the least fat and the most cocoa flavor possible. Italians generally use half milk and half water, but the ratio hardly matters, because a secret ingredient makes all the difference. I've taken to using half skim milk and half water, and the results provoke reactions ranging from gratifying interest to recipe-hounding.

The secret ingredient is nothing more than cornstarch. It ennobles a simple cup of hot chocolate, making it a regal amalgam of chocolate sauce, pudding, and old-fashioned hot cocoa. The dense liquid coats a spoon beautifully, like a thin glaze or a wood stain. It also leaves an appealingly cracked wash on the walls of the cup; a fortune-teller could likely make something portentous of the patterns. Arrowroot, another pure starch, works equally well. Potato starch, often the thickener of choice in Italy, is a bit gross for hot chocolate; the goal is something pudding*like*, not hot pudding.

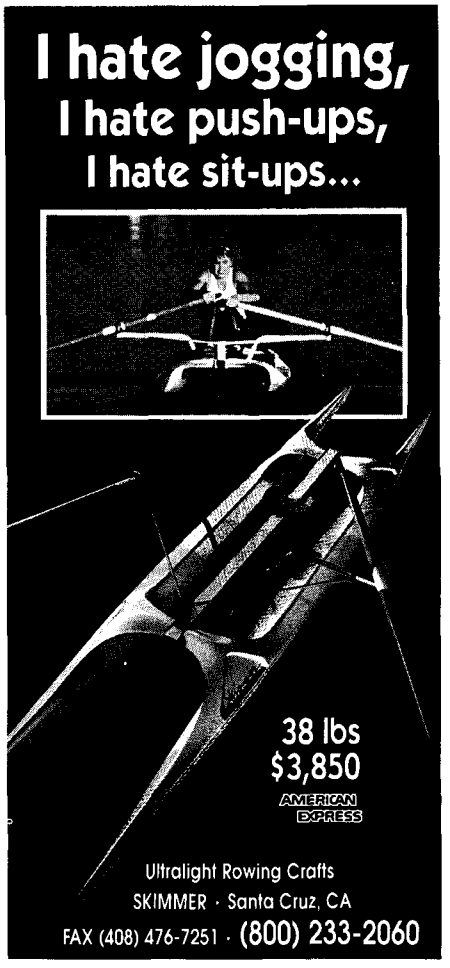
BEFORE moving on, I'd like to say a few unkind words about commercial hot-chocolate mixes, which are based on cocoa powder. They're too sweet, to begin with. Nestlé Quik, which I recently bought hoping to find it better than I remembered, seemed unbearably sweet, and no wonder—like most cocoa mixes, it contains about 80 percent sugar. Mixes frequently contain inferior cocoa powder, and my various tastings have shown me that the flavor of the cocoa powder you begin with is critical. It can be as deep and nuanced as good coffee. Mixes often include powdered milk, which has that awful bone-meal taste. The more highfalutin ones, like a new Nestlé "European" line, use artificial flavors and vegetable oils, leaving a residue in the mouth like an oil slick.

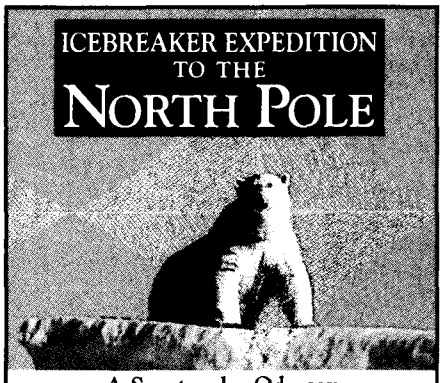
If you rely on a commercial mix, you might take a tip from Susan Purdy, a skilled baker who has written excellent books on cakes and pies, including the new *Have Your Cake and Eat It, Too*: add at least half again as much cocoa powder to the mix, to cut down on the sweetness and beef up the flavor. Unfortunately, this won't eliminate the tinny aftertaste of a flavored mix. Quik is relatively unsullied, and will benefit from the addition of an equal amount of good cocoa powder. All you're buying in Quik besides cocoa powder, though, is sugar, vanillin (synthesized vanilla), and lecithin, which helps powders stay suspended in liquid.

The key to the rich drink I fell in love with in Turin is the profligate use of cocoa powder. My guide in brave excess has been Ann Hodgman, the author of the new *Beat This!* cookbook, surely the funniest book ever written about food—anyone who has been blue lately, or has spent more than five minutes in the kitchen, should buy it. Hodgman says that she knows how to make anything delicious: "I just double the chocolate and add some bacon."

Using the proportions in Ada Boni's *Talismano della Felicità*, the Italian *Joy of Cooking*, I have developed a (baconless) general formula for hot chocolate. You can prepare double or triple batches of the dry ingredients and keep the mixture in a jar, and add a third to a half cup of the mixture per cup of liquid. If this sounds like a lot more dry to wet than you're used to, wait: you'll see the combined wisdom of Hodgman and Boni. To make two generous or four modest cups, in a saucepan whisk together half a cup of cocoa powder, one teaspoon of cornstarch or arrowroot, a third of a cup of sugar, and half a cup of water, on or off a low flame—it will dissolve either way after thirty seconds or so. Add half a cup more of water and a cup of milk, of whatever kind you like. Keep stirring over low to moderate heat for about ten minutes, scraping the bottom to prevent scorching, until the mixture thickens. I wish I could recommend scooping up some of the dry mix from a canister, stirring it with water or milk, and putting the mug into a microwave oven for a minute or two. But every time I have tried preparing hot cocoa in a microwave, no matter how much headroom I leave in the cup it boils over and makes a mess.

I think my recipe provides the ideal dark brew, to be sipped from small cups (proper chocolate cups are somewhere between demitasse and teacups in size). To bring the liquid to a more familiar consistency, simply add another cup of hot milk or a half cup each of water and milk. Optional additions are a teaspoon of vanilla, a pinch of salt, or a sprinkling of freshly ground nutmeg (which accentuates





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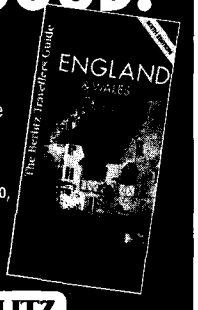

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chocolate better, I think, than cinnamon). But if the cocoa powder is good, I don't want any of these. My favorite is Pernigotti, a cocoa in a class above all others. Many aficionados agree with me, and we speculate about what makes it so superior: Some sneaky form of sugar? Chestnut flour? The only ingredient listed after cocoa is one percent vanillin. Yet that single addition doesn't seem to explain how Pernigotti can be good enough to eat straight. I discovered Pernigotti long ago at an Italian trade show; now Williams-Sonoma sells it (though not through mail order), so it's very easy to find.

My second favorite cocoa is De Zaan, a Dutch brand, not to be confused with Dutch-process cocoa powder, which has alkali—a base, similar to baking soda—added to darken the color and make the powder easier to suspend in liquid; I don't find that "dutching," as it's called, makes any difference in flavor or workability. De Zaan is usually sold only in bulk to the food industry, but the U.S. sales office will send you a 250-gram tin for $8.95 plus shipping (the number is 203-351-9509).

And what of Hershey's, that ever-reliable staple? It dissolves beautifully, even though it isn't dutched, and it makes such a thick mixture, for reasons I can't discern (it's pure cocoa powder), that you need to halve the amount of cornstarch you use or you'll end up with pudding. The flavor, sad to say, is oddly chalky and very acidic. I like acid in coffee, but I prefer a smooth, sweet roundness in cocoa.

If the idea of drinking a chocolate bar appeals to you, you can begin with melted chocolate rather than dry cocoa powder, using what is often called the Viennese method for making hot chocolate—although during a week of café-going in Vienna a few years ago I saw powder come out from beneath the counter whenever I ordered hot chocolate. Melting chocolate over a heat source is a tricky procedure, subject to sudden burning. Double boilers are required for stovetop melting; I find that the easiest way is in the microwave oven. Break or chop the chocolate into rough pieces, pile them into a measuring cup, and cover it with plastic wrap. Books sometimes suggest an ounce of chocolate to a cup of milk, but listen to Ann Hodgman—use two ounces. Heat two ounces for one and a half minutes, or four ounces for two and a half. The squares and shards will probably look like watches in a Salvador Dalí painting; stir them vigorously with a whisk or a wooden spoon to create a smooth paste. Separately, scald the amount of milk you will need, either in the microwave or on the stove. Beat it into the melted chocolate, which won't rebel by solidifying or clumping if the milk is good and hot. I'll never love this drink as I do thick cocoa made with cocoa powder, but many people will find it irresistible when made with half milk, half cream.

As with cocoa, the choice of primary ingredient makes all the difference. I don't recommend Baker's or any unsweetened chocolate, which will require much doctoring to be palatable. Try a bittersweet or sweet chocolate you enjoy eating (Valrhona and Callebaut are the current chocolate-lovers' raves). It's hard to suggest amounts of sugar and flavoring, because chocolate often has both added to it: you'll have to drink some and take note of what seems missing. Flavored chocolate bars will give you flavored hot chocolate, similar to the currently popular (and mostly appalling) flavored coffees: raspberry, orange, cherry, hazelnut, and the like. The flavorings (usually syrups or jellies) will melt nicely if they don't contain solid bits of nut or caramel or nougatine or citrus rind, which will create a forlorn sediment at the bottom of the cup.

It seems that most people have strong feelings about hot chocolate, and you'll probably want to perfect your own variations. Adding a shot (about two ounces) or two of espresso to a half cup of cocoa is my own favorite, creating a copy of the Turinese *bicerin*, which is served in glasses with silver holders in the city's gorgeously restored Art Nouveau and Art Deco bars. Or you can add liqueur—coffee, chocolate, or hazelnut. Many will like whipped cream or, for a reversion to childhood, marshmallows. A friend recently asked what to do about the marshmallow problem—regular are too big, and mini are too small and chewy to be any fun. Ann Hodgman, as usual, has the solution: wet scissors. Snip regular marshmallows into quarters, and they'll be just the right size to melt slightly on top of hot chocolate. This is the sort of multiculturalism we all can swallow.

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Downwinders

Some casualties of the nuclear age

by Thomas Powers

AMERICAN GROUND ZERO
The Secret Nuclear War
by Carole Gallagher. MIT, 427 pages, $50.00.

ATOMIC HARVEST
by Michael D'Antonio. Crown, 304 pages, $22.50.

CAROLE GALLAGHER

Atomic Energy Commission propaganda booklet flanked by pictures of Sherry Millett before and after chemotherapy for leukemia

In retrospect it is clear that the Atomic Energy Commission gave the game away when it canceled or postponed bomb tests at the Nevada Proving Ground if the wind was not blowing in "the right direction." How could there be a "right" direction? The AEC insisted for a dozen years, from 1951 to 1963, that no danger was posed to the local population by the detonation of 126 nuclear devices. The U.S. government has insisted in court, on numerous occasions in the years since, that atomic debris carried by the wind had nothing to do with the dead and deformed sheep, the children with hyperthyroidism or leukemia, the women with breast cancer and the men with lung cancer, or the litany of vague complaints of weakness, nerves, muscle pain, shortness of breath, and chronic fatigue repeatedly cited by a host of citizens of Nevada and Utah who came, in time, with quiet irony, to refer to themselves as "downwinders." If the millions of their fellow citizens in the vast Los Angeles megalopolis were in the "wrong" direction from the atomic tests in the atmosphere, just what was right about the sparsely settled desert communities to the north and east of the wasteland known as Frenchman Flat?

The wind was often right in the spring of 1953. Four times in the months of March through May sheepherders in Utah saw the sky light up to the south and west. A kind of smoky haze would later pass over them, heading north and east. One morning just after a test called Harry, in mid-May, the Bulloch brothers of Cedar City were in camp, preparing to drive their sheep from winter pasture to the lambing sheds at home, when Army technicians wearing protective gear approached their wagon. "You guys are in a hot spot here," the Army men said. "You better get these sheep out of here."

This advice was timely but not helpful. The only way to get the sheep out was to walk them out. That took twenty-five days. On the way the ewes began to lose lambs—not just a few, but hundreds. The Bullochs had never seen anything like it. When the ewes succeeded in carrying to term, the lambs were often born dead—"some," according to McRae Bulloch, "with their hearts outside of their bodies, skin like parchment so you could see right inside to their organs."

The story was repeated in many parts of Nevada and Utah that spring: lambs

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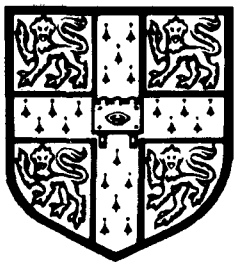

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aborted, lambs born dead or deformed, sheep with muzzles burned and blistered, sheep with their wool falling out, black sheep with strange white patches, sheep that couldn't walk, sheep that lay down and died. Like many of their neighbors, the Bullochs were left at the end of the lambing season with a great pile of sheep carcasses. Nothing remained but bones by the time AEC scientists finally showed up to check for radiation with a Geiger counter. "Is it hot?" one scientist asked. "Is it HOT?" came the reply. "It's so hot this needle just about jumped the pole!"

The Bullochs were pretty much wiped out by the death of their sheep in 1953. Representatives of the government made vague noises about compensation but nothing was forthcoming. Two years later the Bullochs joined six other ranchers in a suit against the federal government for recovery of their losses, but government lawyers successfully argued that the problem was malnutrition, not fallout. If the AEC could persuade a federal judge that poor feed was all that ailed thousands of sheep with muzzles blistered from grazing meadows in the direct path of a cloud of atomic fallout, then there was not much hope for a fair hearing of the inherently vaguer claims of human ills—that five cases of childhood leukemia in a town of 2,000, let us say, was at least four too many.

CLAUDIA Peterson, one of the witnesses cited in Carole Gallagher's powerful *American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War,* grew up on a farm outside Cedar City, Utah, not far from the Bullochs' ranch. When she was three or four, she saw a fireball from an atomic blast on the horizon but she thought it was a flying saucer. She saw the piles of dead lambs but she thought it was in the natural course of things for some lambs to be born dead or with two heads or without legs. It didn't occur to her that the flying saucer might have anything to do with the dead sheep. Later, when she was in the sixth grade, a boy in the fifth died of leukemia. That was in the natural course of things too. So was the fate of another boy two years later, who had a cancerous leg amputated and then died. When she was in high school, the mother of her best friend died of cancer, and then Peterson's sister, Cathy, was hit by a kind of cancer blizzard of tumors in her liver, lungs, brain, and breast. Peterson thinks it was her sister's death, at last, of melanoma that finally pried out of her the question, Why all this cancer and death? The answer became clear following the illness of her own daughter, Bethany, years and years after the flying saucer and the dead sheep. It began when Bethany was three and had a pain in her stomach, variously diagnosed by doctors in St. George, Utah, where Peterson and her daughter were living at the time, as constipation, anemia, and growing pains. In fact it was a tumor the size of an orange. Bethany did not get better, but the diagnoses did. Eventually doctors in Salt Lake City told Peterson that her daughter had stage-four neuroblastoma; they were right, and Bethany died of it, resolving Peterson's last doubts about the causes of the cancer epidemic. Peterson told Carole Gallagher, "Oh, I'd just like to stand up and scream, 'Do something you dumb people, they're killing us!'"

This is what is known as anecdotal evidence—that is, it is not evidence, because it is anecdotal. It does not prove anything. Gallagher's book is full of it. In fact, anecdotal evidence is the only kind of evidence Gallagher really cites. Each story is accompanied by a full-page black-and-white photograph, usually of the storyteller. These are like the pictures Richard Avedon takes when he takes pictures of ordinary people. They are generally head-on, stark, high-contrast, brutally detailed portraits, although a few are in effect still lifes, like the photograph that accompanies the testimony of a woman named Kay Millett. It is shot from above. Two pictures of Millett's daughter Sherry and an old AEC booklet are arranged on a lace runner on a table. The AEC booklet is open to a drawing of a goofy-looking hayseed holding a Geiger counter. One of the pictures shows Sherry at perhaps three, a beaming, pudgy blonde baby in a sailor's blouse. In the other Sherry, four, about to die of leukemia, has ballooned up like the fat lady in the circus. The photograph is a little hokey but dignified withal; all the same, it's anecdotal evidence.

Gallagher is clearly determined to make the most powerful and damaging case she can that the federal government recklessly threatened the health of those citizens of Nevada and Utah with the bad luck to live downwind of the proving ground and is therefore morally responsible for forty years of death and suffering, but she goes

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about this task, for the most part, in a cool and restrained manner. There is a lot of talk about quite horrific things—a deformed human fetus like a bunch of grapes, for example—but with a few exceptions we do not see them. One exception is a sad and gentle portrait of a man who has had much of his face carved away to remove cancers, leaving him looking strangely like a question mark. The rest of Gallagher's photographs are straightforward portraits of men and women who lived downwind, or worked for the AEC with nuclear materials or in nuclear environments, or had the bad luck to be among the 250,000 soldiers and civilians who took part in aboveground tests to prove that a conventional war of battle and maneuver could take place on a nuclear battlefield. Their stories are almost all sad accounts of illness and death or of years and years of just plain feeling like hell for no discernible reason. They are all anecdotal and don't prove anything. It's like the story, cited by several of Gallagher's witnesses, of Howard Hughes's last film, *The Conqueror*, shot in Utah in 1954. "As you know," said Elmer Pickett, a mortician in St. George who took Susan Hayward's twin boys fishing during the shooting of the epic, "that cast, the majority of them died of cancer." Hayward played a tempestuous maid who captures the heart of Genghis Khan, played by John Wayne. She died of brain cancer, and Wayne died of stomach and lung cancer. There's something grimly fascinating in the idea of a film cast and crew dying one by one of cancer, as if struck by the mummy's curse. But it's still anecdotal evidence; it doesn't prove anything.

WHAT the downwinders in Nevada and Utah went through was pretty much repeated by those who lived near the nuclear-reactor complex in Hanford, Washington. Their ordeal also began with an epidemic of deformed sheep and included the standard casebook of cancers and vaguer disabilities. Michael D'Antonio's *Atomic Harvest* is an account, scrupulously fair, of the unfolding public debate throughout the 1980s over health hazards posed by the Hanford complex. Some of these hazards were dramatic. The release of 19,000 pages of official records in 1986 included reports of what amounted to an experiment conducted on the public at large in the final three months of 1949. The process for separating plutonium from uranium was deliberately speeded up in a way that multiplied the release of radioactive materials into the atmosphere; measurements in the surrounding area showed levels of radioactive iodine as great as eighty times the maximum considered safe. The purpose of the so-called green run was to establish experimental data that could be used to estimate plutonium production in Soviet reactors, and thereby help American intelligence analysts to estimate how many bombs the Soviets were building. Whether the green run caused any cancers is impossible to say, just as it is impossible to say whether any particular heart attack has been provoked by secondhand cigarette smoke, a diet heavy in saturated fats from hot dogs and french fries, or plain bad luck in the genetic draw.

Decades of scientific claim and counterclaim, in and out of court, have failed to establish precisely how radiation causes cancer and other ailments, and especially how much radiation is too much—a frontier referred to as a threshold. The AEC and its successors have insisted that the threshold is relatively high; some scientists say it is low, and perhaps does not even exist at all—meaning that a population's exposure to *any* level of radiation, however slight, will always result in *some* incidence of cancers. John Gofman, a veteran of the Manhattan Project, which built the first atomic bomb, later did a study of radiation effects for the AEC which found a very low threshold. If the whole U.S. population were exposed to the maximum "safe" dose, Gofman said, cancer deaths in the United States would increase by about 16,000 to 32,000 a year. This was not what the AEC wanted to hear, and Gofman soon stopped getting government contracts. A study of the Hanford area in the late 1980s showed that over the years more than 20,000 local children could have received dangerous doses of radioactive iodine with the potential for causing thyroid cancers and other problems. Did it happen? A fair observer might conclude that it probably did. A fair observer might conclude that the case is not proved. D'Antonio says of one investigative journalist's work, "As with virtually every piece of objective reporting on the nuclear debate, the articles reached no firm conclusions."

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must agree: First, the AEC expressed its innermost convictions on the relationship between fallout and human health every time it canceled a test because the wind failed to blow in the "right" direction. And second, the extent of every radioactive threat posed to downwinders, the record of warnings recommended but never issued, the health histories of employees of the AEC, the details of plant operations and fallout from nuclear tests, the map of hot spots measured at one time or another in virtually every state in the union, the horror stories of radioactive wastes casually dumped, have all had to be dragged out of stonewalling officials pleading national security. It is only in the past few months, under the new Secretary of the Department of Energy, Hazel O'Leary, that the file keepers have at last begun to let go of the secrets wholesale. It is not hard to see why they waited so long. Secret radiation experiments on unsuspecting human beings—retarded high school students among them—violated the rules of medical ethics in the 1940s just as they would now. The AEC understood from the beginning that the domestic production and testing of nuclear materials depended on the sufferance of the public, which in turn depended on ignorance. Gallagher reports that President Dwight Eisenhower "is alleged to have said, 'We can afford to sacrifice a few thousand people out there in the interest of national security.'" It is hard to imagine that Eisenhower could have been dumb enough to say that. A little evidence supporting this claim would have been helpful. But there is very little doubt that official Washington was prepared at least to *run the risk* of a few thousand deaths in the interest of national security. Downwinders take this as gospel. "They knew it caused cancers," Pat Broudy, a founder of the National Association of Radiation Survivors, told Gallagher "They knew it could cause birth defects, but they felt it was worth the sacrifice of a few men for the good of the country." Gallagher and D'Antonio have cited cases of sacrifice in plenty, but did the country get any good out of it?

SOON after the Soviet Union closed the railways and highways connecting West Germany with the combined American, British, and French zone of occupied Berlin, in June of 1948, President Harry Truman presided at a White House meeting to consider the Allied response. Truman and his advisers believed that weak Allied military forces were confronted by a huge Soviet army in East Germany. Only one credible threat was available to keep the Soviets at bay—nuclear weapons. Deeds, not words, conveyed the threat: a fleet of American B-29 bombers, of the sort modified during the war for delivery of huge, bulbous plutonium bombs like the one that destroyed Nagasaki, was ostentatiously dispatched to a British airfield within range of Moscow. The B-29s carried an implicit message.

But did the B-29s carry bombs? At the close of the meeting at which this step was decided on, Truman was approached by the assistant secretary of the U.S. Air Force, Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, who told the President that the Berlin emergency found the USAF in an embarrassing situation: no bombs were available to load aboard the fleet of bombers. The current model of the plutonium bomb, called the MARK III, required two days of assembly by a crew of forty-eight technicians; most of the bombs carried on the AEC's inventory books were lying about in pieces. *However*, Whitney added, turning to the good news, the USAF did have some practice bombs, called "pumpkins," which were identical to the real thing in size and shape. These could be loaded aboard the B-29s in the full glare of secrecy until genuine bombs could be assembled to replace them. Whether this was done is uncertain. But the dispatch of aircraft was certainly intended and perceived as a nuclear threat. The result was a standoff—no attempt by the Americans on the ground to fight their way through to Berlin, an airlift that kept the city supplied, and eventual Soviet acceptance of Berlin's division and a halt to the blockade, very likely encouraged by fear that any military attempt to seize the city would prompt atomic retaliation.

The lesson was not lost on the U.S. government. An inability to match Soviet forces man for man on the ground, for the simple reason that no democracy could tax itself so heavily for arms in "peacetime," might be compensated for by huge stockpiles of atomic weapons, which were cheap compared with conventional armies. That, in a sentence, is the history of the arms race at the heart of the Cold War. American nuclear weapons were the counterweight to Soviet armies.

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The Soviets understood this equation, of course, and attempted to neutralize American nuclear weapons with their own, thereby regaining the decisive edge promised by their huge conventional armies. In pursuit of this will-o'-the-wisp the USSR built scores of thousands of nuclear weapons of dozens of types, but the Americans always remained one jump ahead, with increasingly sophisticated weapons and credible strategies for using them. The testing that dumped radioactive fallout on both sides was the by-product of a whirlwind technical evolution of nuclear weapons from the nearly five-ton behemoth that destroyed Nagasaki to adjustable-yield warheads small enough to fit in the nose of an artillery shell. Early weapons just slammed together lumps of fissionable material; later developments exploited the geometry of implosion, for example, to enhance yield, making weapons smaller and cheaper. The plain-vanilla gravity bomb of 1945 became a whole warehouse of varied weapons, each with its own special purpose: clean bombs; dirty bombs; bombs that burrowed into the earth, seeking underground command posts; bombs that went off undersea, seeking submarines; bombs that went off high over the earth, to fry the brains of electrical devices with a huge shower of electromagnetic pulses; bombs that killed tank crews with radiation but didn't flatten towns or cities; bombs delivered by guidance systems so precise that they could destroy anything with a known location on or near the surface of the earth. (For information about what the weapons designers were testing over the past four decades see Volume II of the *Nuclear Weapons Databook: U.S. Nuclear Warhead Production*, published by Ballinger in 1987.) The results of this tireless invention were weapons powerful enough to threaten human life on the planet, a fact not quite realized by those in command of the weapons. There were several years in the mid-1980s when the human experiment could have ended in a day. Peaceniks and pessimists would not have been surprised, but the Joint Chiefs of Staff would have been astonished. They thought nuclear weapons were weapons, not instruments of doom.

The worst failed to happen. In fact, things worked out even better than American officials had dared to hope. The threat of atomic retaliation bred caution on both sides, and none of the many small

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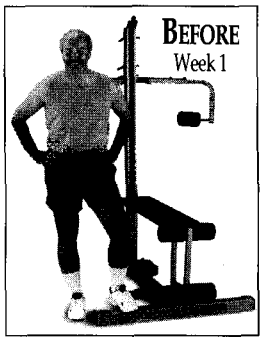

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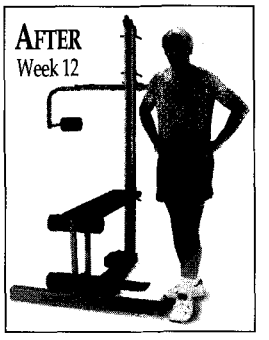

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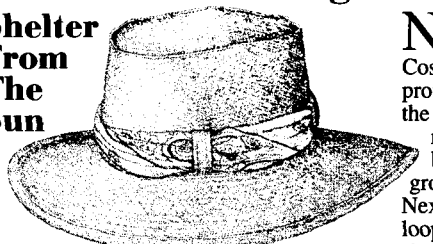

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wars of the era grew into a big war. But what really amazed the peaceniks and pessimists, of whom I was one, was the fact that the Soviet Union collapsed in the late 1980s under the financial strain of keeping up. American plans for a space-based system for defense against missile attack, popularly called Star Wars, threatened to neutralize the trillion-dollar strategic rocket forces built by the Soviets since their humiliating retreat during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. After a few years of blustering protest and dire threats the Soviets, under a new leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, considered the zillion-dollar price tag for a space-based defense system of their own, confronted the empty Soviet coffers, and dropped out of the business of being a superpower. The full history of this amazing turnabout awaits free access to Soviet archives, but it is already clear that both the beginning and the end of the arms race at the heart of the Cold War were intimately related to the progress of nuclear invention.

Where does this leave the downwinders of Nevada and Utah, who feel betrayed by their country? It was nice to be on the winning side, but nuclear testing poisoned the air they breathed, the grass eaten by their sheep and cattle, the milk drunk by their children. Some number—no one knows how many—of the aborted and deformed babies, the cancerous thyroids, the leukemias and tumors suffered by the downwinders, were wounds and deaths suffered in the battles of the Cold War. But there have been no battle ribbons, no military funerals, no thanks or, until the recent revelations, even simple recognition. Is this just the grudging hardheartedness of governments? Or is there something peculiarly American in the downwinders' belief that they have been willfully mistreated and Washington's insistence that it has done nothing wrong and has no questions to answer?

JUST before the Second World War the literary critic Philip Rahv published an essay titled "Paleface and Redskin," in which he argued that American styles, attitudes, and concerns came in two classic types—those of the gentle, feeling, discriminating moralists he called "palefaces," and those of the confident, loud, impetuous celebrants of America he called "redskins." Rahv was interested in the way this split in the national psyche played itself out in our literature, but the fissure is easily mapped in our politics and history as well. On the one side is yearning idealism, on the other hard realism. The Abolitionists who brought on the Civil War were palefaces; the men who fought the Civil War and preserved the Union only to abandon the freed slaves at war's end were redskins to the core. So it is with labor unions and robber barons, One Worlders and America Firsters, social workers and hanging judges, those who prosecuted Nazis at Nuremberg and those who hired them as intelligence agents, doves and hawks, environmentalists and clear-cutters, those who take the side of victims like the downwinders and those who sacrifice the few for the many, without explanation or apology. You can persuade some Americans that the downwinders were callously abused for no reason at all, and you can persuade some Americans that a resolute military posture and a willingness to confront Soviet expansionism won the Cold War at a modest price, all things considered. But each of the two groups seems unable to grasp what the other is getting at. Gallagher and D'Antonio have written sad chapters in the paleface history of the Cold War. The redskin history, when it is written, will excuse all by the victory. ❦

A Touch of Sophistication

by Dennis Drabelle

ERNST LUBITSCH: Laughter in Paradise

by Scott Eyman. Simon & Schuster, 414 pages, $27.50.

"THERE is Paramount Paris and Metro Paris," Ernst Lubitsch said, "and of course the real Paris. Paramount's is the most Parisian of all." He was in a position to know. Before crossing the Atlantic, in 1922, Lubitsch had been, according to Scott Eyman, "the most famous film director in Europe." He came to direct Mary Pickford, at her behest. He stayed because he saw that in

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Hollywood he could create the best possible Paris and Budapest and Warsaw, a fake movable feast replete with champagne, caviar, badinage, and seduction—and because his native Germany was roiling with unrest.

In America he outdid himself, producing and directing a sheaf of masterpieces—*Trouble in Paradise, The Merry Widow, Ninotchka, The Shop Around the Corner,* and *To Be or Not To Be*—along with several near-misses, and inspiring a catchphrase meant to do justice to his brilliance: "the Lubitsch touch."

It was something of a misnomer. Well before the cameras rolled, Lubitsch ordained every detail of his films in drawn-out meetings with his collaborators, notably the writers Billy Wilder, Charles Brackett, and the invaluable Samson Raphaelson, and in rehearsals with his casts, whom he coached by acting out their parts as he wanted them played. He "touched" his material in the sense of stroking it exhaustively.

Nor was there a unitary Lubitsch approach. In this solid but awkwardly written book Eyman in effect divides Lubitsch's American work into two periods: the early one of coruscating comedies and musicals, culminating in that magnificent panegyric to worldliness, *Trouble in Paradise*; and the later one of more emotionally engaging works, such as *Ninotchka* and *The Shop Around the Corner.*

Yet the phrase has staying power. During his years at Paramount (1928–1938) Lubitsch helped create the studio's glossy look—a blend of suffused lighting and angular decor which seems to envelop actors in full-body halos. And his hand was never heavy. Given a choice between hammering a point home and leaving it to be inferred, he counted on audiences' getting it every time. For all his movies' other virtues, it's their consistent polish and fluency that linger in the mind, and examining his "touch" still makes for an agreeable entrée into Lubitsch's work.

You find it in his nimble shorthand. In *The Merry Widow*, when it's time for Jeanette MacDonald to leave off mourning and earn her epithet, her clothes and other chattels miraculously change from black to white—not excluding her tiny dog. In *Trouble in Paradise* you learn that Kay Francis and Herbert Marshall are consummating their flirtation from a

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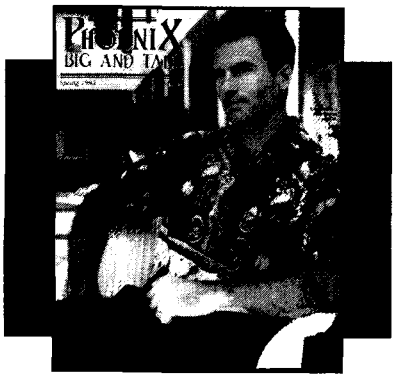

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number of fleshless clues: clocks skipping hours, doors strategically opening and closing, the couple's upright shadows merging on a bed's dual pillows.

Doors, for that matter, were rarely just fixtures on the Lubitschean set. The director reveled in working variations on their uses: to let in, to shut out, to tantalize, to divide milieus, to require waiting, to prompt speculation as to what's going on behind them, to stir prurience. His fellow director Joseph Mankiewicz recalled that Lubitsch even homed in on door *handles*, which he liked to have placed "higher or lower [than normal], that way we can see what is going through [characters' minds] as they try to open a door."

Often a door swings across a sexual threshold. Lubitsch's funniest racy portal sequence occurs in *Ninotchka*, when a trio of male Soviet commissars, newly arrived in Paris, lounge behind a hotel-room door while at intervals waiters enter bearing deluxe capitalist food and drink. As the camera lingers outside in the hall, each arrival of a new treat sets off a volley of *aaahhhhhs*. When a bevy of cigarette girls disappears into the room, the welcoming chorus rises to a scene-closing crescendo.

You find the touch in the way Lubitsch dealt with the Production Code as a batch of rules to be bent and prudes to be outfoxed. When, in *To Be or Not To Be*, Carole Lombard recapitulates pilot Robert Stack's boast of his bombing skills—"Lieutenant, this is the first time I've ever met a man who could drop three tons of dynamite in two minutes"—she's got another kind of releasing prowess in mind. When, in *Cluny Brown*, Jennifer Jones reminds Charles Boyer, "You know what plumbing does to me," she's alluding to more than one kind of pipe.

You get finesse in the acting Lubitsch delivered onscreen. He rarely discovered anybody, but the list of Hollywood veterans who gave him the performance of their lives is long and various: Kay Francis, Miriam Hopkins, and Herbert Marshall, in *Trouble in Paradise*; Jack Benny, whom nobody else figured out how to direct on film, in *To Be or Not To Be*; Frank Morgan (the Wizard of Oz himself), in *The Shop Around the Corner*; Don Ameche, in *Heaven Can Wait*; and Jeanette MacDonald, in *One Hour With You* and *The Merry Widow*.

Lubitsch had a knack for ferreting out

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the comedian in actors previously written off as strictly staid: Gary Cooper, in *Design for Living*, and, of course, Greta Garbo, in *Ninotchka*. His attempt to do the same with Merle Oberon in *That Uncertain Feeling* ranks as a creditable failure in a hopeless cause.

KAY Francis is a special case. A sleepy-eyed, soft-voiced brunette who shared with her contemporaries Marlene Dietrich and Elmer Fudd the foible of pronouncing her *r*s as *w*s, she spent much of her career playing noble sufferers and decked out like a duchess, her name a byword for "best-dressed."

Francis took roles that other, savvier actresses turned down, and overexposed her modest talent. It's hard, in fact, to think of another star who made so many deservedly obscure movies. She said she couldn't wait to be forgotten, and her career fizzled out in the mid-1940s. But there will always be *Trouble in Paradise*, to whose tone of airy amorality she is crucial. As Madame Colet, the perfume tycoon's widow who hardly minds being seduced and swindled by Marshall in cahoots with Hopkins, Francis seasons her smugness with charisma. She slinks through her Deco mansion, tossing off Wildean quips and strewing mangled *r*s, leading and following Marshall along a Möbius strip of sexual pursuit, so witty and soignée it's a wonder the whole country didn't start baby-talking.

Only Lubitsch was able to raise her to this level of supernal stylishness. Without him Francis needn't have waited long to be forgotten; because he worked with her, she never will be.

It took cunning to pack so much artifice into movies that were supposed to please a mass audience. It also took long hours. Lubitsch's life, a friend commented, "was an uninterrupted ribbon of film." His overworking habits helped cut short his two marriages and contributed to his death from a heart attack in 1947, at the age of only fifty-five.

UNFORTUNATELY, where Lubitsch had hands, his biographer has paws. Also the author of a Mary Pickford biography, Scott Eyman seems to have amply researched the new book. His knowledge of Hollywood history and sociology is sound; his judgments are shrewd. He can coin a nice phrase in isolation, as when

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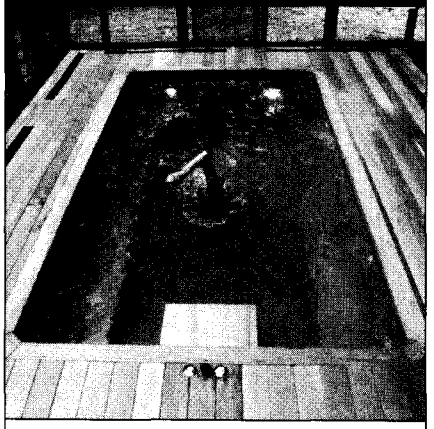

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he calls Ben Hecht's dialogue for *Design for Living* (a complete rewrite of the Noel Coward play) "crinkly cellophane aphorisms." But he regularly garbles his syntax, dangles his modifiers, and blunts his sentences with the passive voice. Here's an omnibus example: "Sitting in the rushes with Thalberg, Loos's line was spoken." (Translation: While sitting in a projection room and watching the rushes with Irving Thalberg, Anita Loos heard a line of hers spoken.)

When Eyman imagines Lubitsch stepping up to explicate his art, the content is right but the construction ungainly: "'This,' [Lubitsch] says to the audience with the genial smile of the master confectioner, 'is artificial, it is candy, and we both know it. But no one can make it like I can.'" Eyman's ragged prose does a disservice to Lubitsch, who, despite using an immigrant's faulty, strongly accented English, always spoke with impeccable elegance in his chosen medium.

Once, when he was working for Warner Brothers, Lubitsch received a pointed telegram from Harry Warner. "YOU HAVE PICKED YOUR OWN STORIES AND MADE YOUR OWN PICTURES WITHOUT INTERFERENCE," it reminded him, "BUT [YOU] MADE THEM TOO SUBTLE THE WORLD WANTS THRILL AND EXCITEMENT." The next word was "STOP," but Lubitsch didn't. He wagered his career on the hunch that Warner was wrong, that subtlety could be thrilling and exciting and that the world wanted it.

Not all his movies made big money, but not many flopped either. Altogether they hold their own artistically with the oeuvres of Griffith and Ford, of Hawks and Hitchcock. And with most of Lubitsch's best work now available on video, the world still thrills to his touch. ❦

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The Troublesome Offspring of Cardinal Guzman

by Louis de Bernières. Morrow, 388 pages, $22.00.

Mr. de Bernières continues his chronicle of life in a nameless Andean country with the further trials and triumphs of the people of Cochadebajo de los Gatos. The characters—guerrillas, drug dealers, japesters, whores, resuscitated conquistadores, ghosts, assorted law officers, clergy frocked and unfrocked, peaceful citizens, and magical cats—are those already established by the author, and they perform with their usual unnerving fluctuations between gruesome bloodshed and Rabelaisian sexuality. Cardinal Guzman is a new arrival in this world. He is a once-decent man corrupted by money and power, whose uncharacteristic attempt to reform national morality produces a crusade led by a pious fanatic and conducted by loot-happy brutes. The campaign eventually reaches Cochadebajo de los Gatos, where Father Garcia, "unjustly unfrocked owing to the allegations of an importunate and deluded female parishioner," preaches on a divine revelation, "which, to put it plainly, is that the greater part of creation is a mistake and an oversight that God heartily regrets. . . . And so the truth is that we are all imprisoned angels, the descendants of imprisoned angels, living in a world created by Satan and not by God. . . ." It is not clear what the congregation of jaguars makes of Father Garcia's sermon, but the human population happily endorses his recommendation that the situation be corrected by fiestas and fornication, for surely a good God intended his people to be happy. Besides, the program requires little change in their regular

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRUNO DEBAS

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habits. One can foresee approximately what will happen to the Cardinal's inadvertent crusade when it reaches the town, but the details of the action are wildly fanciful, comically grotesque, mercilessly savage, and altogether unpredictable, while the author's satirical commentary hits targets well beyond the confines of South America.

Animal Happiness

by Vicki Hearne. HarperCollins, 238 pages, $20.00.

Ms. Hearne's collected pieces are held together by her interest in the character and training of animals, but the individual items have, on the whole, a decidedly casual quality. They frequently seem to have been written in haste while the author's mind—or most of it—was devoted to some other matter.

The Alarming History of Medicine

by Richard Gordon. St. Martin's, 256 pages, $22.95.

Forty years ago Mr. Gordon wrote *Doctor in the House*, followed by *Doctor in* so many other places that he can be considered as ubiquitous as Kilroy. Mr. Gordon's attempt to make a condensed history of medicine as amusing as those fictional adventures is somewhat strained, verging at times on the snide, but it is thick with irreverent opinions, interesting oddities, and unexpected conjunctions. "As Lister discovered antisepsis knowing nothing about streptococci, and Lind cured scurvy while knowing nothing of vitamin C, so Darwin founded genetics knowing nothing about DNA."

On Fire

by Larry Brown. Algonquin, 192 pages, $17.95.

Mr. Brown, the author of well-regarded novels, has turned to a work of fact, an account of his seventeen years with the fire department of Oxford, Mississippi, from which he retired in 1990 with the rank of captain. His memoir is not a chronological record but rather a description of particular episodes illustrating specific aspects of a dangerous and often treacherous job, a job that sometimes in-

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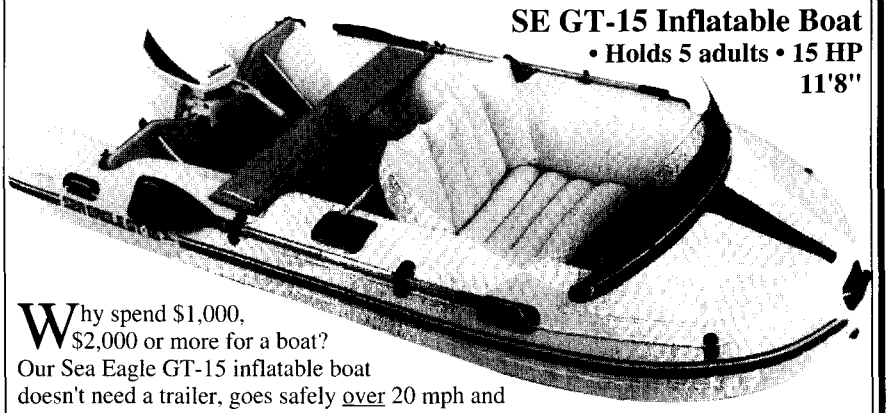

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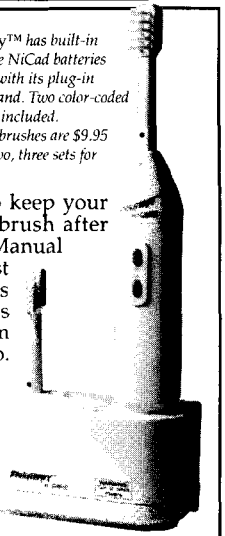

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duced "a weird callousness" because nobody wanted to think about "the people we couldn't save." Aside from fires and car crashes, Mr. Brown writes engagingly of Sam, a uniquely stupid dog, and of his own collisions with rabbits and a barbecued pig. The book is unpretentious, solidly real, and delightful.

Marble Skin

by Slavenka Drakulić, translated by Greg Mosse. Norton, 192 pages, $20.00.

The narrator of Ms. Drakulić's novel is a female sculptor, a woman obsessed and to some extent paralyzed by memories of her mother's love affairs, although these memories are partly imaginary. That the mother subordinated her daughter's interests to those of her current lover is, however, believable—but the fact emerges only after much overwrought sexual maundering by the narrator has worn the reader's patience thin.

The Princes in the Tower

by Alison Weir. Ballantine, 303 pages, $23.00.

Either of the sons of Edward IV had a better claim to the English throne than their uncle, who assumed the crown as Richard III. He took the boys into custody and confined them to the Tower of London, from which they never emerged. There has been much argument and speculation about what actually happened to the children, with Thomas More in the 1520s representing Richard as a murderer, and modern revisionists crying Tudor propaganda and representing him as a maligned innocent. Ms. Weir's impressive researches should settle the matter. She has traced More's probable informants, pursued contemporary accounts (one surfaced as recently as 1934), and applied firm common sense to what she has found. On the old rule about circumstantial evidence, Richard had opportunity (the boys were under his control), means (loyal henchmen eager for advancement), and a really smashing motive, for in those days it was thought passing brave to be a King and ride in triumph through London. Romantic adherents of Richard will, of course, refuse to believe a word of Ms. Weir's case.

The Green Knight

by Iris Murdoch. Viking, 480 pages, $23.95.

The title of Ms. Murdoch's novel arouses an expectation of Arthurian connections, which is encouraged by the early appearance of three girls who promise to be the Lady of Shalott in triplicate. Then comes a youth with an unreasonably troublesome injury—the Fisher King, perhaps? There follow a would-be anchorite seeking mystical experience, Cain and Abel, a minor poltergeist, a dog who performs a rescue at sea, and the Green Knight himself. That is, the author claims the man is the Green Knight, but after the preceding distractions one is entitled to doubt it. Regardless of skillful writing, the novel behind all the portentous religious and mythical trimmings is the story of some upper-middle-class Britons who, with much chatter (they all talk alike) and numerous weeping fits, emerge from their accustomed ruts, thanks to the Green Knight, and arrive at a settlement in which every Jack gets his Jill, or at least a reasonable facsimile. The ultimate effect is of a trompe l'oeil cathedral façade imposed on an ordinary house.

The Language Instinct

by Steven Pinker, Ph.D. Morrow, 388 pages, $23.00.

The author is a professor and the director of the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience at MIT. As a result of his own studies and those, duly credited, of other explorers in his field, he has concluded that there is an instinct—that is, a built-in system—for the mastery of language inherent in all human brains and identical in its functions regardless of the language that the individual infant is obliged to learn. The evidence for his belief is complicated but persuasive even to a reader impervious to statements like "XP → (SPEC) $\bar{X}$ YP*," and Dr. Pinker writes with acid verve, particularly in regard to self-appointed language pundits and antique rules illogically derived from Latin. As he rightly observes, "Julius Caesar could not have split an infinitive if he had wanted to." This is an exciting book, certain to produce argument.

—by Phoebe-Lou Adams

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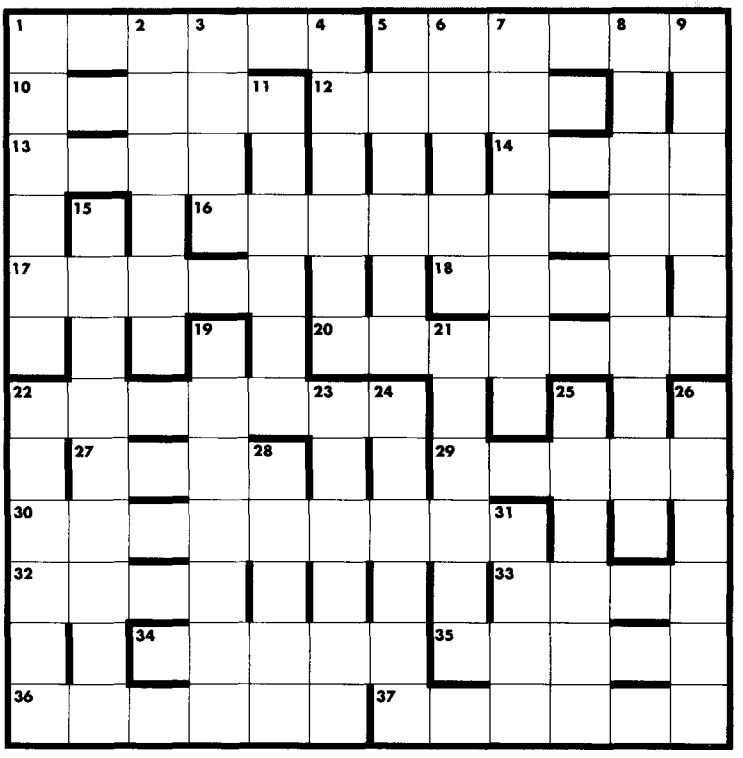
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Crazy Eights

In the card game of Crazy Eights an 8 has the magical power to change any of the four suits (Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, and Spades) to another. In this puzzle the suits are represented by C, D, H, and S, and wherever one of these letters occurs in the diagram, solvers are to write an 8, whose magical power will transform that suit into a different one in the intersecting word. For example, if 1 Across were SIMPLE, you would write 8IMPLE, and 1 Down would be a word starting with C, D, or H. Answers include five proper nouns.



See page 112 for Puzzler contest details.
The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 116.

Across

1. Runs in celebrity's innings (6)
5. Asian's habit is to hold note in "Caravan" (6)
10. Share with us a dream-inducing fruit (5)
12. Broadcast sales pitch in resort (5)
13. State hesitation about attending to the Left (4)
14. Lawyer: "Thanks for information" (4)
16. Sign of Italian island cereal (9)
17. Joins kindergarten with lousy youngsters? (5)
18. Muslim mystic provided American backing (4)
20. Hire a producer of maps and graphs? (7)
22. Progress, keeping in contact with ruler (7)
27. Seal group circles northern body of water (4)
29. Pink champagne's first in the mouth (5)
30. Openings for "joke time" among priests (9)
32. One's gaining fifty pounds with troubles (4)
33. Turner's starting after ABC's successor?...Sure (4)
34. Assistant retreating after the debut of my communication groups (5)
35. Stick with old craft (5)
36. Some Europeans finally raising stinks (6)
37. Like many sheets, not drawn back after bed (6)

Down

1. Gofer's failure on year (6)
2. Trouble in moving a burden to Iowa (6)
3. Go for sentimentality (4)
4. Shed tears over points in burial places (6)
5. Dislike cap on claret (6)
6. Free, after limitless back biting (5)
7. Heard chess great's crack (7)
8. Getting back around one, traveler collapsed (9)
9. Private penning article is not so serious (6)
11. Number adder upset about error (6)
15. Polar bears up north following one of the French out (9)
19. The woman's into ruination! (7)
21. Answer about the birthplace of democracy (6)
22. Cleaning tool in green and blue (6)
23. Princess puts up with Dopey (6)
24. Agent mostly interpreted display (6)
25. Old city fellow's grave (6)
26. Design outside of hollow tire roller (6)
28. Load pinch of tea into bag (5)
31. Feline swallows the midsection of the bird (4)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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WORD HISTORIES

by Craig M. Carver

freak

Even as they made it to the World Series last year, the Philadelphia Phillies' reputation for being an odd collection of characters persisted. Speaking of the outfielder Lenny Dykstra, Lee Thomas, the club's general manager, said, "Here, Lenny fits in without really being noticed a whole lot. He might be a *freak* on other clubs, but not with these guys." Many authorities suggest that *freak* (an abnormally formed organism, especially a person or an animal; a monstrosity or curiosity) originated in a Germanic root that yielded the Old English *frec*, meaning "greedy, audacious, bold," and *freca*, "a bold man, warrior, hero." *Freca* became *freke*, meaning "a remarkable creature such as an angel, demon, or giant." *Freke* supposedly then, in the sixteenth century, made the difficult semantic leap to the earliest meaning of *freak*, "a whim or capricious notion" ("I feare the fickle *freakes* . . . Of fortune false"—Edmund Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, 1590). An alternative explanation has the Old English *frician*, "to dance," as the root, which yielded *friken*, "to move nimbly," and *frike*, "eager, brisk." *Frike* or *freak* came to refer to capricious behavior, because whims are like capering thoughts (*caper*, "to frisk or gambol playfully," is a figurative derivation from the Latin *caper*, meaning "goat"). Later it referred more specifically to a prank or trick, and was used in the expression *freak of nature*, the immediate source of *freak* meaning "monstrosity."

scab

In a time-honored union tradition, Newspaper Guild picketers on strike last September against the *New York Post* chanted, "Don't be a *scab*!" as members of the production unions that had already signed contracts debated whether to cross the picket lines. The prehistoric root **skep-*, "to cut or split," is the ultimate origin of *scab* (one who works while others are on strike). The root became the proto-Germanic **skabb-*, which yielded the Old Norse *skabb* (a scab), a word borrowed by English in the thirteenth century to refer to skin diseases with pustules or scales and to crusted dried blood over a wound ("Anoynte al his heed. . .til al the *scabbis* therof be wel tobroke"—*Lanfrank's Science of Cirurgie*, c.1400). Influenced by its derisive Middle Dutch cousin *schabbe* (a slut or scold)—brought to England, as the *Oxford English Dictionary* puts it, "by foreign vagrants"—the English *scab* became slang for "a scoundrel" ("Love is such a proud *scab*, that he will never meddle with fooles nor children"—Robert Greene, *The Honorable Historie of Frier Bacon and Frier Bongay*, c.1590). In the United States, in the nineteenth century, *scab* came to refer first to one who refused to join a union and then to one who refused to honor a strike. (*Strike*, "to refuse to work, in an effort to force an employer to meet certain demands," probably derives from the former practice of lowering, or "*striking*," a ship's sail to symbolize the sailors' refusal to go to sea.)

slur

In the heated New York mayoral campaign last year, a supporter of the incumbent, David Dinkins, charged that "fascist" elements supported the Republican challenger, Rudolph Giuliani. Giuliani responded by labeling the charge an "ethnic *slur*." *Slur* (an insult or disparaging remark) is rooted in the proto-Germanic **sleu-*, meaning "to hang loose, be slack," which is also the origin of *sleet*, *slush*, *slug*, *sluggard*, and *logy*. Something hanging down loosely behind gets dragged along—hence the Middle Low German *slūren* and the Middle Dutch *sloren*, meaning "to drag or trail." And something dragged goes through dirt and mud. When English adopted either the Middle Low German word or a cousin of it, *slur* had two basic meanings: "to drag," which is rarely used today ("Her soft, heavy footsteps *slurred* on the stairway as though her strength were failing"—*Century Illustrated Magazine*, 1889), and "watery mud" ("Yet it [work] may not be foule, being soyled, and slubbered with the *slurre* of a rotten heart"—Daniel Dyke, *The Mystery of Self-Deceiving*, 1614), which survives only in *slurry* (watery mud or anything resembling it, such as wet cement). Because mud dirties whatever it comes in contact with, *slur* came to mean "to smear or sully" ("Its beauty would be *slurred*, its good things reviled"—John Owen, *Of Temptation: The Nature and Power of It*, 1658) and then "to sully or depreciate a person's reputation." Speech, too, can be "muddied," in a figurative sense ("His speech, which up to that time had been distinct, began to *slur*"—Rudyard Kipling, *Many Inventions*, 1893).

Illustrations by Blair Thornley

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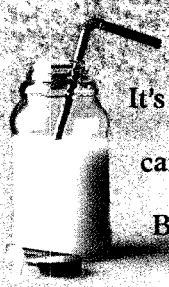

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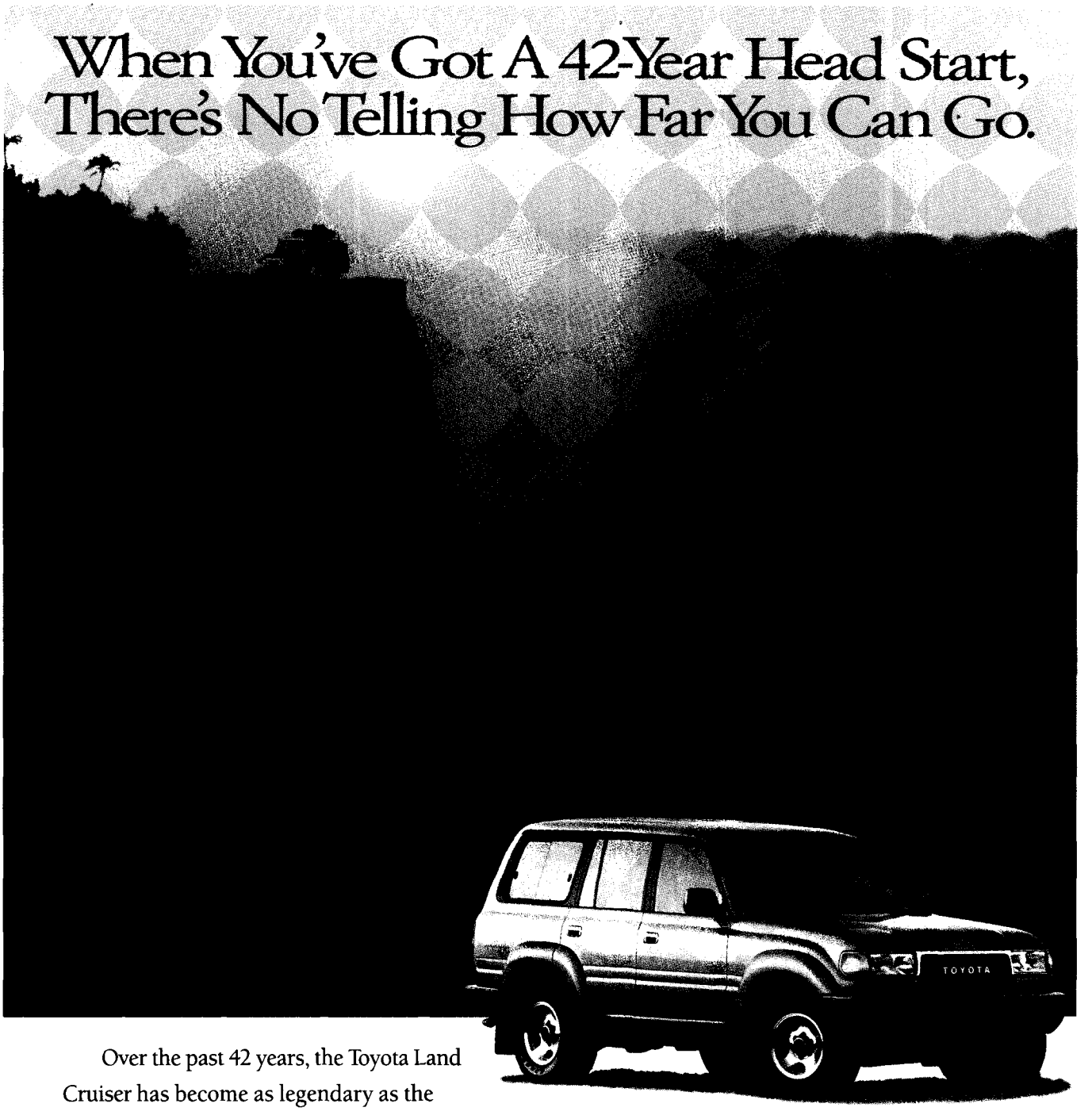

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